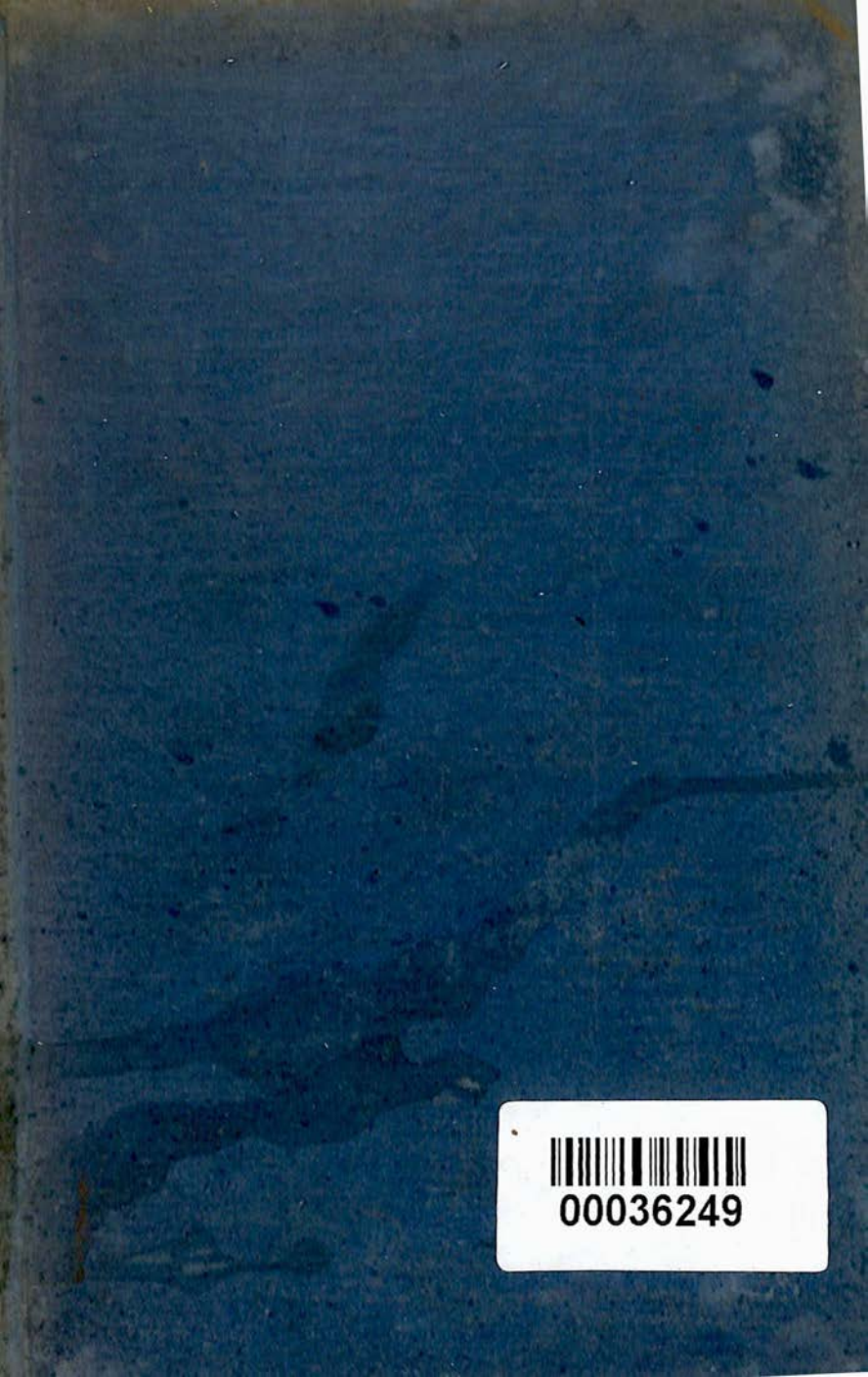
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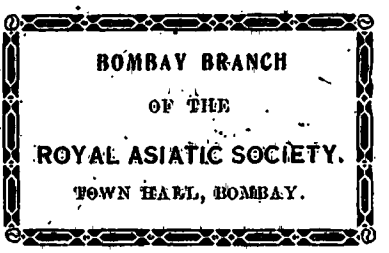

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HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

VOL. II.

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HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

BY

WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

VOLUME II.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume contains the story of the Anglo-Spanish Conspiracy; a story which has not yet been told, except in patches, and only then without the connecting bands.

I have already noted these Studies as a work of identification. Among other things now made out in the Tower, may be named:—the situation of our early Court of King's Bench and Court of Common Pleas,—the connexion of St. Thomas of Canterbury with the Water Gate,—the lodgings of Lady Jane Grey,—the crypt of Sir Thomas Wyat and the Men of Kent,—the chamber of Archbishop Cranmer,—the apartments of Bishop Leslie,—the various towers in which Raleigh lodged,—the two prisons of Lord Grey,—the dungeon of Guy Fawkes and Father Fisher,—the locality of the conferences of Father Garnet with Father Oldcorne,—the home of the Wizard Earl and the three Magi,—the tower from which

Seymour escaped,—the room in which Overbury was poisoned,—and the lodgings in which the Earl and Countess of Somerset lived. The new facts will enter into a good deal of our history and biography.

But the interest of this volume (it may be hoped) is general rather than local; lying mainly in the new lights under which recent research permits a student to tell the great story of our national life.

In making these Studies—the occasional labour of my pen for more than twenty years—I have received much help from Sir THOMAS D. HARDY, Deputy-Keeper of the Public Records, and from Lieut.-Colonel F. C. WHIMPER, Major of the Tower. J. E. GARDNER, Esq. has opened to me his unrivalled Collection of Old Prints and Drawings; and A. KINGSTON, Esq. has lent me his critical eye and ready hand in reading and copying the State Papers in Fetter Lane. I tender them my warmest thanks.

6 ST. JAMES'S TERRACE,
REGENT'S PARK.

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HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANGLO-SPANISH PLOT.

DURING the fourteen years through which Raleigh wrote in the Bloody tower and lit his fires in the Garden house, a line of prisoners, more or less closely linked with his fortunes, passed into the Tower; some of them to spend within these vaults a week of doubt and pain; others to die in them a daily death for years; this man to baffle his keeper and slip his chain; that man to fret out his soul against bolt and bar; while most of their fellows in mishap were only too glad to escape from damp and gloom, from wheel and cord, by way of either the hangman's rope or the headsman's axe.

The first of these prisoners, in point of time, was Thomas, Lord Grey of Wilton Castle, who

lived nine years in the Brick tower on the northern wall. With Grey came William Watson and William Clarke, two Secular priests, the alleged companions of his crime. These men were followed by Guy Fawkes and his companions, who were thrown into the dungeons of the Keep; by Fathers Garnet and Oldcorne, who were lodged in the lower rooms of the Bloody tower; by Father Fisher, who has left his name on a door-post in the White tower; by the Earl of Northumberland, 'the Wizard Earl,' who lay in the Martin tower; by Lady Arabella Stuart, who lived and died in the Belfry and the Lieutenant's house; by her husband, William Seymour, who escaped from the Water gate; by the Countess of Shrewsbury, who occupied the Queen's lodgings; by Sir Thomas Overbury, who was poisoned in the Bloody tower; and on the morrow of Raleigh's liberation, by Lord and Lady Somerset, who lived and quarrelled in the Bloody tower and the Garden house. All these prisoners may be called the Raleigh group.

The story of this group of prisoners is that of the rise and fall of a great conspiracy, the Anglo-Spanish Plot. This conspiracy endured

through many years, survived various chiefs, and put on divers shapes. It had a foreign birth and a foreign end, though it was conducted on the English soil by English hands. Conceived in the cabinet of King Philip, it was prepared in the English Colleges of Douai and Valladolid, and put into action in our London suburbs and our midland shires. The men who began it were Jesuits, and the pupils of Jesuits; the men who continued it were Councillors and Peers; but whether the work was done by Persons and Garnet, or by Cecil, Suffolk, and Northampton, the purpose kept in view at Madrid was ever the same—the subordination of our national life to that of Spain.

While the Jesuits held the reins, the motive power was religious zeal; when the Councillors held the reins, the motive power was gold. Though trained in a foreign school, the Jesuits could only be persuaded to serve the King of Spain so long as they felt that, in serving him, they were doing their duty to God and Holy Church. The Peers who succeeded to their office as 'Friends of Spain,' allowed no such scruples to stay their course. Having a country to sell, they made their infamous bargains with the Spanish ambassador, and built

such palaces as those of Hatfield and Charing Cross on the wages of their shame.

This Anglo-Spanish Plot was the mother of many treasons. The Essex rising—the Priests' Plot—the Main and the Bye—the Seymour Escape —and the Powder Poisoning, were but details springing from a common source.

The chief of this plot for many years was Henry Garnet, Prefect of the English Jesuits.

The Prefect, a square bluff man, of middle age, much worn by care, if not by drink, and looking ten years older than he was, had a string of different names. In Flanders he was known as Father Greene, Father Whalley, and Father Roberts. In England he passed under the priestly names of Father Garnet, Father Darcy, and Father Walley; under the lay names of Mr. Farmer and Mr. Mese. He had as many homes as names; not to speak of the houses of his penitents and pupils, which were to him as homes. He had a house called White Webbs, in Enfield Chase; a lodging in Thames Street, near Queenhithe; a secluded residence on Wandsworth Common; an old manor at Erith, which he used for the coming and going of his agents by the Thames.

This man of many names and domiciles is said

to have kept a merry table. He was accused of a fondness for female society which ill became a priest, and the name of Helen Brooksby was coupled with this hint of frailty, even more than that of her sister Ann Vaux. These hints of an undue fondness for wine and women rest, not on the words of his Protestant enemies, but on those of his Catholic friends—most of all, on the words of his fellow-confessors.

It would be unfair to urge against Garnet all that was said of him, even by his fellows, after he had played his game and lost his life; for the whole body of the Secular clergy hated him as an upstart and intruder in their Church, while many of his brethren in the Society, blessed with more patient tempers and more moderate hopes, disliked his memory as that of a man who had brought discredit on their craft. From neither side had Garnet much in the way of mercy to expect; a balance must be struck between the words which were spoken and the facts which were proved.

The Prefect was a fine linguist, a subtle reasoner, a good divine; but no one who knows the story of his time will say that he lived a perfectly blameless life. When a lad at Win-

chester school, he was flogged for offences which have no name; and the conditions under which he resided as a grown man in Italian cloisters, in Flemish camps, and in English country-houses, were in high degree unfavourable to personal virtue. Most of his days and nights were spent in evading spies, in studying tricks and masks, in passing under false colours, in conducting spurious business. One day he was a rich merchant from the City, next day a poor soldier from the wars; here a married man, there a single one; now a tavern-ruffler, with rapier ready on his thigh; anon a starving curate, full of ardour for his Queen. Each day was to him a fight for liberty and life. The fate of his old companions weighed upon his mind. Southwell had been hung. Weston still lingered in the Clink—a daily warning, that if he meant to live and labour for his Church, he must put on every disguise that natural craft and wide experience could suggest as a cover for what he was. Short of this masking, he would fail at once. Yet while it would be harsh to urge against Garnet that his changes of name and dress were in themselves immoral, as tending to deceive, it would be idle not to see that a life so spent implies a

vast deal of lying, and that lying, for whatever purpose it may be done, is utterly corrosive to heart and soul. A saint could not live a daily lie.

That Father Garnet loved good wine and plenty of it, we know from the highest source—himself. Claret was his table-drink, and he liked to wind up his repast with sack. Sometimes he drank so freely that his servants had to put him to bed. Now and then he got drunk. But there is no reason to believe, with Bishop Abbott, that he was a constant sot; the very life he led being evidence against such a calumny. That he was fond of female society, and indulged his weakness to the point of public scandal, there can be no doubt. The ladies living under his roof may have thought themselves the Martha and Mary of a new reign of grace; but the Prefect knew that the world would not judge their conduct in this pious vein. The world condemned them. The Church condemned them. In the writings of the Secular Priests, this weakness of the Jesuit Prefect was denounced in terms which leave no room for doubt as to what was meant.

The rival and destroyer of Father Garnet was his successor as chief of the Anglo-Spanish

Plot in the second phase. This man was Lord Henry Howard, better known as Earl of Northampton, the title which he bore in the reign of James the First.

Northampton was the second son of Lord Surrey, singer of the Songs and Sonnets, lover of the Fair Geraldine. An Italian soothsayer promised the poet that his child would pass through a youth of want and trouble — a manhood of honour — an old age of wealth. The noble Poet may have smiled at such auguries for a son of the ducal house of Howard; but these words of the Italian wizard were called to mind when the poet had fallen beneath the axe and his son was an outcast and a beggar in a foreign land. A dark Greek fate appeared to pursue Northampton's race; his father, the Poet, had perished on the block—his brother, Duke Thomas, the lover of Mary, had perished on the block—his nephew, Philip the Confessor, had died in the Tower. A pauper in the land of his birth, an exile in Italy and France, the future patron of learning was unable to buy a new book, and the designer of Audley End was forced to seek shelter in a barn. Is it strange that miseries which few men could have borne at all, should have unstrung in the Poet's son a mind

that was quick and fertile, rather than great and strong? He had lived in Rome, where his life was gracious, but not pure. In Rome he became a Catholic—a Catholic of Italian rather than of English type. From the Tiber he passed to the Arno, where he studied art in the Pitti Palace and morals in the Piazza dei Signori. In Florence he left behind him that best companion and guide of genius, a loyal and manly heart; for in the court of Cosmo de Medici he learned the art of changing sides with the time, of urging and denying with the same soft speech, of seeming to be all things to all men; a Prelatist in the company of bishops, a Reformer in that of Puritans, a Catholic in that of priests, a Royalist in that of kings. With one lesson learned from the Tower, corrected by a second lesson learned from the Lateran, he lost his faith in creeds, in councils, and in men. Religion, Country, Virtue, were to him but words; words sounding in his ears like the idle wind. Place, Power, and Money, he could understand; and after these things had been won, he could taste the delights of pomp and rank. His taste was fine and his learning wide. He loved to build great mansions, to buy fine pictures, to store up costly

jewels, to collect rare books. All these things cost large sums, and money was to him a need, like his daily bread.

Bent on building up once more the fallen house of Howard, he never paused to debate the means. Show him a road that led to place, he took it; show him a road that led to gold, he took it; never stopping to inquire if the path were such as an honest man could take. The brother of a Duke who had lost his title and estates, how could Northampton afford to be an honest man? A little was gained on the coming in of James; he was made Earl of Northampton; his nephew Thomas was made Earl of Suffolk; his grand-nephew, the son of Philip, restored in blood, was created Earl of Arundel and Surrey. But the family was poor, and the ducal coronet of his race was lost.

Northampton, now growing old, and fretted by a foul disease, was still stout in purpose and stanch in brain. No sense of shame ever checked his tongue. If a man could help him to get on, he was willing to serve that man in ways which would have degraded the vilest slave. While Cecil reigned, he pandered to that sly and secret voluptuary by putting in his way the Countess of

Suffolk, his lovely and venal niece; just as, some years later, he encouraged her still more beautiful and profligate daughter, Lady Essex, to violate her nuptial vows with Carr.

This hoary sinner, having a keen sense of the value of virtue, as an article of trade, kept a large assortment of moralities on sale. No lord of the court could make a finer speech. His maxims were always noble; his words were always chaste. He never sold a niece for money without boasting of his honour, and never hung a priest without protesting his devotion to his Church.

The first part of this Anglo-Spanish conspiracy ended with the executions following on the Powder Plot; the second part, with the executions following on the Powder Poisoning. Garnet, the master-spirit of part the first, was hung in St. Paul's Churchyard; Northampton, the master-spirit of part the second, escaped the penalty of his crimes by dying on the eve of his arrest.

CHAPTER II.

FACTIONS AT COURT.

WHILE the Queen's ashes were yet warm at Richmond, a schism broke out in her council at Whitehall, not only in words which pass, but in acts which live. A part of her council was for making terms with the King of Scots, now known to be her heir; such terms as their fathers had often made with uncrowned kings; such terms as their sons had afterwards to impose on William the Third. Lord Grey was one of those who urged that James should be asked for pledges to respect our English rights and to follow our English laws. Sir John Fortescue supported the views of Grey; while Cecil, and the two Howards (soon to be known as the Earls of Suffolk and Northampton) contended that all such things could wait, that subjects must not make conditions, and that the wisest course would be to trust their king.

Cecil knew too well in what he placed his trust. For three years past he had employed Lord Henry in a secret correspondence with the Scottish court, from which he had learned enough of James to see his drift and gauge his strength. The Scottish prince, he found, was bent on peace; peace with the Austrian Cardinal, peace with the Spanish court; peace on every side and on any terms; even though it might have to be the 'King of Hungary's peace.' This policy suited Cecil, who felt that in case of war the public power would pass away from clerks and secretaries into the hands of warriors, such as Raleigh, Nottingham, and Grey.

The war party wished to shape the policy of James so as to give him glory abroad and peace at home; a government that should be a living force, a people who should be content and free. The way to these ends, they said, was to raise the siege of Ostend, to drive the Jesuit missionaries out of London, to unite the English people in defence of public liberty and public law. The peace party wished to leave the question of policy to the King; well knowing that he spoke of the Dutch as rebels, that he wished the Cardinal success, and that, in reference to the treaties which bound

him to aid his allies, he openly announced his intention not to be tied by the contracts of a woman and a fool.

Thus, in the gardens of Whitehall, on the day of the Queen's death, before the King of Scots was yet proclaimed, two parties were in line; an English party, having an English platform, on which stood Raleigh, Fortescue and Grey; a Spanish party, having a Spanish platform, on which stood Cecil and his friends. The first party wanted liberty and war, and the cry of their partisans in the streets was, 'Down with the Austrian! Ho for the Dutch!' The second party wanted peace and place; they had no public cry, for they had no partisans in the street; but their purpose was to become the 'Friends of Spain.'

These factions fell into a strife, which raged until the King arrived at the Tower and made known his will. James wanted money and quiet; neither of which he could receive so long as the guns were booming over Dover straits. Cecil promised him money and quiet in return for place and power; blessings which he persuaded James no other man could give. The King could not know, in that early time, that his Secretary of State would sell his secrets and his services for

Spanish gold; and had he known the truth, he might only have chuckled in his sleeve, sworn a coarse oath, and begged some portion of the spoil. Any way, the new King gave his confidence to that smooth and serpentine clerk, so that Cecil, in any war he might have to wage against Grey and Raleigh, would have the crown, the army, and the judges, at his back.

The King came in without terms; in fact, these terms were not made until the times of his son and of his son's son.

People in the Strand and Cheape, who heard that their young Prince was bent on forsaking the Holy War, could not believe it. How, they cried, betray the Dutch! How could we betray them and not ourselves? Was not the war of the Armada burning? Had not Montjoy just smitten the Spaniards at Kinsale? Was not Vere at Ostend? Had we not thousands of troops in the Netherlands? Were not Flushing, Rammekins, and Briel, in our power? Were we not bound by treaties? Were we not fighting our enemies on a friendly soil, in lieu of having to fight them on our own?

Such was the view then taken by every one, except the King's friends and those who wished to

be thought his friends. So strong and wide was this popular feeling for the Dutch, that James could not help seeing that to recall his troops from Ostend and Flushing might be fatal to his peace, if not perilous to his crown. The change must be wrought out step by step. Ere such a course could be safely taken, the war must have lost its charm for the public mind; and the fighting generals must have been tarnished by some dubious charge. Could Vere be starved out of Ostend? Could Raleigh and Grey be compromised with the partisans of war? The first was easy, the second not so easy. Vere had only to be dropt; his letters to be left unread, his prayers unnoticed, his supplies unsent. A cold intelligence, working in a chamber at Whitehall, could count the very hours of Vere. One day the height of human daring would be reached. Brave hands would faint through famine, stout hearts would fail in force, the city would fall into the Austrian's power, and James could affect a sorrow which he would not feel. But neither Grey nor Raleigh could be ruined by leaving him alone. If Grey was to be got out of Cecil's way he must be lodged in the Tower.

Now Cecil was a perfect master in the art of

snaring men into suspicion; yet he could hardly have succeeded in so short a time in meshing his powerful rivals, had he not been aided in his work by an unexpected group of spies. These spies were the Jesuit missionaries whom Grey and his Puritan friends proposed to harry from the land.

For many years past, a few cautious Jesuits, under their Prefect, Garnet, had been hiding in the country, chiefly in the London suburbs and in the midland shires; but on the Queen's death becoming known abroad, a larger body came over sea from Flanders and Castile, to aid in promoting the peace with Spain. In crossing the straits, they knew they were breaking the English law, since no member of their Order could then reside on English soil; but they reckoned, not without cause, on the Secretary of State being purposely blind to their coming over, since their object was to promote the King's most ardent wish. In Cecil these Jesuits met their match. The men who moved the Order were no strangers to him; some of them were in his pay, still more of them were in his power. A list of the fathers lay in his desk; a list giving their true names and their false, with an account of the houses in which they lodged, and

of the persons who helped them to come and go. He knew something of Father Fisher, otherwise Percy, otherwise Fairfax, who lived in Sir Everard Digby's house. He was acquainted with Father Oldcorne, the Confessor of Mrs. Abington of Hendlip Hall. Garnet was his neighbour, and might almost be called his chum. Father Creswell wrote to him from Valladolid, Father Persons from Rome. By these and other means he held the threads of their purpose in his grasp, and felt that should the day for a tussle with the Order ever come, he would be strong enough to drag them down.

The fathers were allowed to land and spread themselves through the London suburbs and the country districts; but they were not suffered to come and go unwatched. The Secretary had his agents on the quay of every port and the deck of every ship. The jovial skipper who gave the fathers a passage in his bark, and who seemed to them the pink of good fellows, was his spy. The bland old priest, who welcomed them on shore and gave them such wise counsels, was in his pay. One band of Jesuits came over in the Golden Lion, Francis Burnell commander. Fresh from Antwerp,

where the Austrian Cardinal and the Spanish Infanta had been proclaimed King and Queen of England, these fathers were hot with zeal, and finding the skipper a man of their own mind, they were free in talk about the King of Scots. They said the King was doomed, and talked of the speedy destruction of all his house. Before they were put on shore, Captain Burnell had reported their words to one of Cecil's spies in Harwich, who sent a copy of their speeches to Whitehall.

The spy who watched the coming and going of these fathers in Harwich was Francis Tilletson, a priest.

A part of Cecil's craft in dealing with political rivals, lay in the adroit advantage which he took of the bitter feuds then raging in the ancient church; so as to gain from each party in that church the means of crushing the other, when a policy of repression happened to serve his turn. Blood ran so high between sections of the Catholic clergy—between the Secular priests and the Jesuit missionaries—that each was ready to betray the other into his hands. Tilletson was not more eager to denounce the Jesuits in Harwich, than

Garnet was to destroy the Seculars in London. Each rejoiced when his rival fell. If Jesuits and Seculars were both opposed in theory to the crown, they opposed it in a different spirit, and sought their ends by a different path. Each had a purpose and a plot; and the purpose dearest to each was to betray his fellow priest to the law.

From his neighbours of Enfield Chase, Cecil got the clue to a wild, spent plot, in which two members of the Secular priesthood, who had made themselves hateful to the Fathers, were much concerned. The plot had failed, the plotters had dispersed. Some ale had been drunk in Carter Lane; a gang of rufflers called the Damned Crew had been raised; and two or three secret conferences had been held between persons of still higher rank; but the dream was past, and the design would have been shrouded in a spy's report, and laid in the grave of all dead things, had not one of the names, which incidentally occurred in the papers, been that of Grey.

A Priests' Plot — there was a name to strike the public ear! A charge was wanted against Grey, the Puritan peer, the enemy of

Philip, the advocate of war. Now, Grey was said to have given two or three private meetings to Sir Griffin Markham, a notorious Papist, and an agent for the priests. What more could men like Cecil and Northampton ask?

CHAPTER III.

LORD GREY OF WILTON.

AMONG the young men of high rank who strove in the later years of Gloriana's reign to make a true religion of their daily lives — to be at once brave soldiers, faithful citizens, and pious sons—to live in the world, yet also live to God—and the roll of these high and noble men was not a short one—the most eminent for his birth, his genius, and his misery, was Thomas Grey, the sixteenth baron of his line; in whom was to expire, in a cell of that Water-gate which Henry the Third had built, the last male heir of a house which that same Henry the Third had summoned to his side.

Grey was nursed under a mother's eye. Until he was ten years old, he lived at Whaddon hall in Bucks, the family seat, where he was taught to read the Word of God, as well as to

ride and fence, to leap the barriers, and to run the ring. As he grew in size, the playmate of a tiny sister, Bridget, and of a baby-brother, who was taken from him at an early day, his mother Sibyl saw with pride and love that he was growing rich, not only in the arts which adorn high rank, but in that spiritual grace which she prized in her son above all the accomplishments of earth. At ten he was called a man and sent into the world. The Greys had always been men of war, and a Grey of Wilton Castle could have no other home than a camp. His chair was to be a saddle, his coat a corslet, his cap a casque of steel. But Lady Grey was anxious that her boy should be a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ, no less than a stout defender of his Queen; and she lived to see him all that she hoped he would become.

Grey was happy in both his parents. Arthur Grey, his father, that renowned Lord Deputy of Ireland who was the patron of Gascoyne, and the friend of Spenser, is known to lovers of great books as Artegal, the Knight of Justice, in the Faery Queen; a princely figure, noble as it is spotless; not more true to the poetic art than to the human life.

In court and camp young Grey was ever at

his father's side, often in the thickest of bloody fields.

For Arthur's son
Held Arthur's spirit.

Once, when he was hardly twelve years old, in a sudden fight, some English horsemen giving way before a swarm of kernes, the Lord Deputy, who had seen the waving line, pricked up, the lad at his heels, and shouting 'Grey and his heir for the Queen,' dashed in among the foe and cut them through. That Irish camp was a terrible school of arms; for a gang of reckless devils, the sweepings of Italian bagnios and Spanish gaols, had been flung into Connaught, where they had built a fortress, called the Fort Del Oro. Roaming through Galway and parts of Kerry, these gangs had ravaged two counties before the Lord Deputy could move against them; but when Artegal leapt to horse, it was to strike a blow that men should not be able to forget. Never since the Lion of Judah went forth to battle, had a sterner spirit ruled a camp than he who led the English force against Del Oro. Grey asked no quarter, and he gave none. The fort was taken, and the enemy destroyed.

It was in this action under Grey, that Raleigh,

then a young captain, won his first red laurels in the field.

From this fierce school of war, the boy was sent to Oxford. Robert Marston, who wrote a life of Grey in verse, declares that now

> Arms entered into league with arts,

but the young soldier was too busy with his work to stay over-long at college. Like his father, and like his comrade Raleigh, he vowed his sword to the Good Old Cause; and while he was yet in his teens he crossed into the Low Countries, to finish his education in the trench and field. The Dutch received him with open arms; and in the front of every charge, his countrymen saw with pride the trail of his crimson plume. Grey brought into the patriots' camp, not only a soldier's sword, but a statesman's thought; not only a dauntless eye, but a clear and resolute mind. He knew, not merely how to fight, but how to turn the tide of battle to a righteous end. He saw what should be done, and how it should be done. Nursed on the passions which breathe in the Faery Queen, the legend of his house, he loathed Grantorto with all his soul, and spurned

the Idol as he would have spurned the nether fiend.

Loving his Queen and country, as he loved his mother and his sister Bridget, Grey was with the foremost in every enterprise by land and sea. He served against the Irish rebels; he sailed on the Island Voyage; he fought on Nieuport sands.

On his return from camp to court he found the Earl of Essex, his old companion of the Island Voyage, commencing that evil course which was to bring him, in a few mad months, to the Devereux tower and to St. Peter's church. Grey warned his friend, and heard his warning received with gibes. Less vexed than pained by his rebuff, he stood apart in silence, until he saw that Essex was falling away from all his English friends, and taking hold of an Anglo-Spanish crew; giving up Bacon and Raleigh for the pupils of Father Garnet; for men like Monteagle, Father Wright, and Captain Lea. Then he spake to the Earl once more. But all was vain; the Earl having entered on a course from which neither love nor fear could draw him back. Grey told these faithless peers and tavern-plotters to count him in future as a foe.

Lord Southampton, a young fellow like himself, but weak and fitful, heard this warning with open scorn, and put such words on Grey as a soldier could not bear. Grey stopped him and beat him in the public street. This quarrel of the young peers so stirred her court, that the Queen had to send Lord Grey to the Prince of Orange, who was lying in front of Grave, until the storm passed by.

The mettle of the young man having now been proved, he was courted by the chiefs of every side. He joined the party of Raleigh, Nottingham, and Cecil, against the Earl of Essex. He went over to Dublin in command of a regiment of horse to watch the plotters, and when Essex swept back to London, Grey was quickly in his front. When the Earl's folly maddened into crime, the pious young soldier was commissioned by the Queen as her General of the Horse.

Grey's heart was thrown into these courtly broils only so far as they formed a part of that war which his country had to wage against the King of Spain. Not against Essex the courtier, not even against Essex the politician, would he have drawn his sword. The foe whom he smote in the guise of Essex was Grantorto; the Earl,

who had fought by his side, having gone over to the enemy, making a companion of Robert Catesby and a counsellor of Father Wright. When the court was purged of factions, Grey turned his eyes once more towards the fields in which his country's battles were being fought on a foreign soil. Most of all, he strained his vision towards Ostend.

For in those last days of the Queen, a roar of guns was booming above the straits, which spoke to the heart of England as no other crash of earth's artillery could speak. An Austrian Cardinal, married to the Infanta, Clara Isabel, 'heiress of France and England,' lay with a mighty host before Ostend, the last rampart of the Reformed religion in Flanders; the lines of which were held by a garrison of Dutch and English troops, commanded by Sir Francis Vere.

Lying low in the sands, behind a wall of mud with narrow streets, stone houses, and a place of arms, Ostend was a fishing port and village of barely three thousand souls. The town itself was nothing; but this speck of coast was strong in the dykes and sand-hills, in the line of sea, and in the thews of a gallant race. The folk were Protestant, eager to be free; and the people, both in

London and the Hague, were conscious that the battle of their freedom was being fought, and might haply be decided, in the trenches of Ostend.

The strength of Spain was planted before this village in the sands, and month after month went by without giving her the prize. Assaults were made with a vigour which has rarely been seen in war, and never except in a religious war. Yet the town stood out. A rash vow, made by the Infanta, had been kept by her, but kept in a fashion to become the bye-word of every land. Looking over the low roofs and simple works, Clara Isabel, on the day of her arrival, swore by her saints that she would enter the place before she changed her chemise; and that chemise had grown from white to yellow, and from yellow to black, yet Isabel had not entered into the place yet. The Cardinal Archduke's lines were daily creeping closer to the town, and at length a front of batteries built along the coast swept all the outlets to the sea, and cut off succours from the Dutch and English fleets. One day, a whisper ran through the galleries at Whitehall that the port of Ostend was closed, and that news from the beleaguered city must be got by roundabout and unsafe roads.

In this stress of evil, Grey undertook to force the passage with a single ship, and show the troopers in Ostend that they were not cut off. The ship was found and the passage forced. A hundred cannon from the sand-hills opened on his flag, but Grey shot in to port, unscathed by the Austrian fire, and landing in the town, amidst the shouts and thanks of the besieged, he brought to the brave defenders not only much needful succour, but the congratulations of his country and his Queen.

Grey was not simply a man of war. Like his father he was a friend of poets; like his mother he was a friend of preachers. In his religious views, he was a pupil of Reynolds and Cartwright, and the strong party of the Puritans looked upon him as a chief. Yet Grey was the reverse of a bigot. Law and policy were as much his study as divinity and soldiership, and he is known to have held some views on the civil power going far beyond the science of his age. Young, noble, rich, illustrious, what gifts might not fortune be supposed to hold in store for such a man?

Some people thought the highest state of all was not too high for one so gifted and so good.

Shrewd wits were heard to guess that Grey would wed the Lady Arabella Stuart; in which case he might be called, in his partner's right, to ascend Elizabeth's throne.

No one who watched the young General of Her Majesty's horse prancing past Charing Cross, in the closing months of her reign, could have dreamt that his course was already run; that one short year would find him a prisoner in the Tower; that a flagitious charge, a splendid defence, a theatrical reprieve, a lingering imprisonment, and an early death, were all that remained on earth to that dashing peer, the heir of so many glories, the object of so much love.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD ENGLISH CATHOLICS.

THE plot in which Cecil was to entangle Grey was not a conspiracy of worldly and wicked men so much as a fantastic dream on the part of two dull and excited priests.

To see how this plot arose; to understand why the Jesuits betrayed it; and to follow the chain which binds it to the Powder plot; one should recall to mind the exact relation in which the two chief sections of the Catholic clergy stood towards each other in the opening years of James the First. A few words will suffice.

When the great Queen had come to her crown, one body, and only one body, calling themselves Catholic, existed in her realm. During her reign a second body, calling themselves Catholic, sprang into life. The first were the English Catholics, the second were the Roman Catholics; and in the

opening year of James's reign these two sections stood, not simply apart, but in hostile array.

To the first party belonged the thousands on thousands of families in every shire, who had clung, through good and evil, to the ancient rite. These families clung to that rite because it was old and venerable, because it was the rite of their fathers, because it was woven into the texture of their social and moral life. These people never thought of their church as a thing apart from their country. How could they have done so? The English church was just as old as the English name. Their sires had been members of a free church; and they could boast, with cause, that in all their efforts after freedom, that church had borne her part. 'The English church shall be free,' was the very first clause set down in the charter won from John. To tell these English families that their creed was a foreign creed, to be kept by them for the benefit of a foreign priest and a foreign king, was to speak to them in an unknown tongue. They reverenced Rome, as the oldest of Latin sees; but they thought of her as a sister, not as a mistress; and while they gave to Pope Clement the highest honour, they denied his right to meddle in their courts of law. Sub-

mitting to his will in spiritual things, they refused his briefs and declined his authority in worldly things. Even as to church order, they had ways of their own which were not as the Roman ways. They had their own feasts and vigils, their own policy and method, which an Italian could hardly understand and in which he could have no share. Their country was what Rome had once proudly called her, an island of the saints. In one word, the old English church was to these staunch Catholics a national church.

To the second party belonged the new men, few in number, and fierce in spirit, who had been drawn away by Jesuits from the reformed English Church. They were converts; converts of a recent date, and a malignant type; accused of having gone over to the enemy, less from religious heat, than from political passion, and even from family pique. The times were apt to such desertions from the church. Apostasy was a protest; a form of going into what is now called 'opposition.' When a man failed at court, like Philip Howard, the ready way to insult his sovereign was to change his creed. When a man quarrelled with his father, like William Parker, the surest way to worry that father was to send for a priest.

When a man wasted his fortune, like Thomas Percy, the quickest way to escape reproaches from his friends was to be seen attending mass. From Robert Catesby down to Thomas Winter, the motive for desertion seems in almost every case to have been either personal or political discontent.

Each of these parties had their own priests; the first party being led by the Secular clergy, the second party by the Jesuits.

The old English priests were for the most part learned, tolerant, timid men, who gave their thoughts to spiritual things, and wished to leave politics to Kings and Queens. Their duty lay in the care of souls. Their hope was to live in peace, to say their office, to watch their flocks, and leave the results of their patient toil in the hands of God. When the law left them alone—and on the whole they were wisely left alone—they were content. Striving to do good, in the belief that what they taught and wrought were best for their country, they paid scant heed to what was considered the best for Spain.

On the other side, the Jesuits were men of the world, with worldly purposes in view. They were the servants of Philip, whom he had sent into

England to do his work. That prince, having received them into Spain; having given them money and power; having placed the colleges of Seville and Castile in their hands; having espoused their quarrels in Flanders and in Rome, had led them to see that his glory would be their glory, and that in him they would find not only a powerful master but an indulgent friend.

The old Catholics, a slow and sober folk, who tried to keep their fingers out of fire, esteemed it no less a sin to kill a King than to kill a Pope. The new Catholics, hot in blood and bold of speech, contended that a good cause might justify foul deeds; and that the highest cause on earth was that which they professed—the cause of a single empire and a single church.

No outward sign, no inward motive, separated the English Catholics from their neighbours of the country-side. In all invasions, and in all threatened invasions, they were prompt to march. Loving their native land as other men loved it, they were stung to frenzy by reports that a foreigner meant to profane their soil; and moving into line with the first, they struck the foe, not caring to inquire under what flag he fought. The

best of the old Catholic peers and gentry were out in the Armada year.

The new Catholics were strangers in the land. While Lord Montagu, born a Catholic, was riding down to Tilbury Fort, with his son, his grandson, and his tenants in his wake, all armed to defend their country, Lord Arundel, the son of a Protestant duke, was saying clandestine mass and uttering a traitor's prayer in the Beauchamp tower. English but in name, the Jesuits had taught their lay disciples to accept a foreign purpose and a foreign prince. Spain was to be their country, and they were to seek her glory in a way from which their neighbours would be likely to recoil, not only with aversion, but with scorn. They were to consider their native land as lost to God, their neighbours as the heirs of everlasting death. They were to treat their prince as an outlaw, and to hold his judges as accursed of heaven. The converts were not suffered to feel proud of their English birth, but rather to bow their heads into the dust for shame. They were to have no part in the common weal. 'I am become a stranger to my brethren,' cried their oracle, Father Persons, 'an alien to the sons of my mother.' Spain was to be their only country, Philip their only King.

These two bodies were of unequal force.

The English Catholics were half the population, if they were not more. One-third of the peers, one-half the country gentlemen, two-thirds of the hedgers and ditchers, were Catholic. A change of faith is not to be made in a year, not in a hundred years; in England the change had been a work of time, and the work was still going on. Among the county magistrates every second man was a still a Catholic. The Reformed religion had its seat in the great towns; but even in these great towns the opposite opinions were held in strength.

The Roman Catholics were few in number, and scattered through distant shires. It is doubtful whether the Jesuits could at any time have rallied a thousand voices to support them against the ancient clergy of their church. The secret of the influence wielded by Garnet and his helpers lay in the wonder and fear inspired by the great Order to which they belonged.

CHAPTER V.

THE ENGLISH JESUITS.

THE form in which the English branch of the Society of Jesus presented itself to a statesman's notice, was that of an Anglo-Spanish plot; whether he judged them by their personal bearing or by their public acts.

In all countries, the members of this Order mixed with the world, which they affected to despise, and studied how to rule. They were great in colleges, greater still in courts. They made tools of women, and dupes of men who were the slaves of women. They affected to know strange secrets, to possess indefinite funds, to govern by inscrutable means. They could change their names, their costumes, their nationalities, at will. A priest could wear a beard, a monk could deny his shaven crown. They could put on plain stuff, they could sparkle in satin and gold. In making war on the powers of darkness,

they had a right to seize all weapons of war, to employ all arts of deception. Doing Heaven's will on earth, they were free from all scruples which might impede their work.

But what was dubious in the conduct of Jesuits in other lands was carried to the farthest reach by the English branch. Claudius Aquaviva had no disciples so unruly as his English pupils. All Jesuits were inclined by habit to subject the interests of religion to those of politics; the English brethren made that subjection unconditional and complete. As men of the world they took the extremest views of what is permitted; classing conspiracy with love and war, in which everything is said to be fair. They justified treachery — they justified rebellion — they justified public murder. In the schools which their patron, Philip of Spain, had caused to be placed under their control, they bound their pupils by an oath to go back when their course was finished to their native land, and strive by fair means and by foul to win it for the Church of Rome and the King of Spain. Inured to danger, these pupils of the Jesuits crossed the sea—prepared in mind for trouble, and wearing in their fancies the martyr's crown. But they were taught to make the best

of a good cause. and not to throw away their lives. Provided with masks and money, served by their own agents, fed by their own converts, they were able to preach and teach with but little risk. They had means for landing in the ports, for evading spies, for slipping through the nets of justice. Living in what they called 'a strange land,' they mapped off the country in 'shires and hundreds, and on these small charts they marked each lonely beach on which a boat was kept, each country house in which they had a secret room. A Jesuit's business being to go about the world unseen, he had a dozen garbs, a dozen professions, and a dozen names. He had the jargon of many arts and the patter of many tongues. A confessor of women, he learned from them the secrets which he turned against their lords, and through these secrets he could sometimes reach at persons whom he dared not openly address.

This permanent conspiracy on the English soil in favour of a foreign prince, was offensive not only to the old Catholics, who wished to live in peace, but to politicians like Cecil and Northampton, who meant to become the chiefs of a new Spanish party in the state.

For the moment, these politicians were willing to use the Jesuits; but, even while using them, they hoped to compromise and destroy them as a political power.

The Jesuits had not been twenty-three years in London; Persons, the first English Prefect, had not been thirty years a Jesuit; so that the men whom they had trained to act in this foreign spirit were none of them yet beyond middle age. Robert Persons and Edmund Campion had come over sea in 1580; come over against the wishes of the English Catholics; since they came in defiance of the law, and meaning to be a cause of strife; 'creating disturbances,' as Persons had frankly said, 'in places where everything till that time was tranquil.' Being then at peace, the Catholics wished to remain at peace; but this smooth state of things, if good for the clergy and their flocks, had been the reverse of good for Philip, who would gladly have seen the Catholics driven mad with misery, in order that his generals might count on finding a partizan under every roof. The Prefect had come over with two sets of instructions, one of which he had kept in reserve. He was to stir up lawless passions, so as to sting the civil power into a severer course; and he was to put

down the native fasts, and substitute those of the Italian church.

When Persons returned to Rome, leaving Father Weston with the rank of Prefect, he could boast of having made converts of Sir Thomas Tresham of Rushton Hall, Sir William Catesby of Lapworth, and their sons Francis and Robert, then boys of a tender age. Campion, who stayed behind to carry on his work, wrote a letter to the Privy Council, in which he said :—'. . . . . Be it known to you that we have made a league; all the Jesuits in the world, whose succession and multitude must overreach the practices of England; for bearing the curse that you shall lay upon us; and never to despair of your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburns, or to be racked by your torments, or to be consumed within your prisons. Expenses are reckoned; the enterprise is begun. It is of God; it cannot be resisted; so the faith was founded; so it must be restored.' This challenge was answered by a stricter law. Father Weston was locked in the Clink Prison, in spite of Lady Arundel's tears and gold; and the luckless Jesuit who defied his country was flung into the Tower, convicted of high treason and put to death.

Robert Southwell and Henry Garnet were sent from Rome by Persons, to fill the dangerous posts. Southwell took up Weston's place in Lady Arundel's household, while Garnet became Prefect of the English mission. Even the poet showed that in his foreign schools he had lost the human and tender sense of home. 'We have sung the Canticles in a strange land,' he wrote; and that 'strange land' was the country of his birth! In due time he followed Campion to the Tower, and after three years of waiting, was tried and hung; leaving his more cautious and unscrupulous friend, the new Prefect, to continue and complete his task.

Philip found no trustier servants than these English priests; who spread themselves not only over England, but over Europe, in order to do his will. They stood by the side of Kings, and the ministers and mistresses of Kings. Robert Persons was near the Pope; Joseph Cresswell was in Madrid, the Spanish capital; Henry Fludd in Lisbon, then the principal Spanish port. William Baldwin followed Spinola's banner on the Rhine. John Jones lived at Douai. Hugh Owen, the most active and most unscrupulous of these fathers, was in the Cardinal's camp. One of

Father Owen's closest friends was Sir William Stanley; one of his nearest followers was Guy Fawkes.

A crime of the rarest kind and the darkest dye had covered the name of Sir William Stanley with an odium which has hardly any mate. This knight had given up the city of Deventer to the enemy, while commanding an English and native garrison in his sovereign's name. The Jesuits owned his work, praising him for doing what he felt to be right, in face of the adverse verdicts of the world. A medal, commemorative of his treason, was struck in Rome. The rage and shame with which the news of this treachery was received in England cannot be expressed in words. Men said it was the Jesuits' doing; and when they afterwards spoke of Jesuit morals, they mentioned the betrayal of Deventer as one of those facts from which there is no appeal.

A soldier, hated and reviled as Stanley was drew all the desperate spirits who left their country to his side, and a regiment of English renegades was formed by him in the Cardinal's camp, which he fondly hoped to have a chance of one day leading against his Queen.

Garnet fixed his quarters near London, so as to

be within easy reach of his lay supporters, and able to direct the many coadjutors who came over from Spain and Flanders to help in putting England beneath the yoke.

The chief of these helpers were Father Fisher, Father Gerard, and Father Greenway, whom he sent into the midland shires, with orders to attach themselves to ardent women and discontented men. They were to treat the country as a missionary land, to regard their church as a missionary church. England being lost to the faith of Christ, their business was to convert it back; that portion of it which claimed to be Catholic no less than that which avowed itself Reformed. All were gone astray from Rome, they said, and all must be brought into the fold, out of which there was no salvation from death and hell.

The head-quarters of this conspiracy were planted in Enfield Chase.

CHAPTER VI.

WHITE WEBBS.

On the edge of Enfield Chase, about ten miles from Paul's Cross, stood—in the days of James the First—a large and lonely house of the Tudor sort; a house in a narrow lane, so screened by trees that a few paces off it could be hardly seen. It had many rooms, a big garden, and a high fence. The place was a maze of ins and outs; with passages by which visitors might come and go; with traps in the oaken floors and secret chambers in the chimney stacks and the dividing walls. Deep vaults lay below, while a conduit led to the dams and waters of the Lea. This house was called White Webbs, and from its situation and its size it might have been built as a hiding-place for priests and a rendezvous for plots.

Like the whole of Enfield Chase, White Webbs belonged to the Crown. Some thirty years before that time the Queen had granted it to Robert

Hewick, her Physician in Ordinary; and this Robert Hewick had afterwards let it to Rowland Watson, Clerk of the Crown, whose wife still held it on a lease.

One day — about the time when Essex was beginning to court the foreign Catholics, to consort with Catesby and Tresham, to consult with Father Wright—a man of middle age, thick set, with rather jovial manner, came to see the place. He gave the name of Mese, the address of Berks. He wore a coat of fustian stuff, and looked like a grazier of the better class. He had a sister, he said; one Mrs. Perkins, a lady of good means, who wanted to hire a house near London, where she could live in quiet, yet see her friends from town. The Queen's physician saw no reason to suspect his guest, and when the terms were settled between them, Mr. Mese became the tenant of White Webbs.

Robert Skinner, who passed for Mrs. Perkins' butler, took possession and prepared the rooms; putting James Johnson, a servant whom he hired, in charge of this house, while he rode over to Enfield and engaged one Lewis, a carrier, to go with his team to London and fetch in goods. One room was set apart as a chapel; all the things

necessary in performing mass were bought; and the chambers were furnished with books and relics as well as with household stuff.

Three months elapsed before Mrs. Perkins came. She was a lady in the prime of life, and seemingly of ample means. Skinner and his wife waited on her; but she had other servants, both male and female, in her train; including Will Shepherd, her coachman, and Bess, that coachman's wife. In fact, the lady's establishment was framed on a large and costly scale.

She was a Catholic, and her people were also Catholic.

Mr. Mese, of Berkshire, followed his sister to White Webbs, and when he came, he brought his man-servant, a cunning fellow, who was known as Little John. By-and-bye, a Mr. Perkins came to White Webbs; a lean man, with a long face, brown hair, and yellow beard. He had a serving-man with him, called George, whose full name was George Chambers. In what relation Mr. Perkins stood to Mrs. Perkins no one seemed to know. Skinner could have told, no doubt, but Skinner never spoke. He might be taken for her husband, since he came to her very often and stayed with her very long. In fact, although he went

away on business from time to time, he never failed to come back to White Webbs as to his proper home. Mr. Mese also spent much of his time in the Chase; many gentlemen riding down from London to see him, some of whom sat up late at night talking business in his room. These strangers put up their horses, had beds prepared for them, and sometimes stayed in the house for two or three days; on which occasions much venison would be sent for and much claret drank.

Once when Mr. Mese went away from White Webbs on business, he came back in a new name. He was now called Mr. Farmer, and the servants were told to speak of him as such. Shortly afterwards, these servants heard him addressed by some of his friends as Father Walley; and then they knew, if they had not previously suspected, that the homely personage in the fustian coat was a priest. James Johnson, the hired domestic, kept his eyes and ears open; and after a little waiting he found reason to believe that his mistress was not what she seemed; was not named Perkins, was neither wife nor widow, but a single woman, the daughter of a peer. But James was clever enough to keep his secret and his place.

In no long time a second lady came to White Webbs, and took up her abode there. She gave the name of Mrs. Jennings, and the people about the house were told that her husband was a merchant of the City, a good deal away from home. Mrs. Jennings was said to be a sister of 'Mrs. Perkins,' in which case she would be a sister of 'Mr. Mese.' That a warm affection bound the lady and gentleman to each other, any one might see. Now and then, a small creature, with a red beard and a bald pate, made his appearance at White Webbs, who called himself Thomas Jennings, and claimed Mr. Mese's sister as his wife.

None of these people were what they seemed. The homely man in fustian stuff was Father Garnet, Prefect of the English mission. The serving-man called Little John, was Nick Owen, a lay Jesuit, of singular skill in devising places for concealment. 'Mr. Perkins,' was Father Oldcorne; and his serving-man, George, was also a lay Jesuit, in attendance on his chief. The two ladies, passing under the names of Mrs. Perkins and Mrs. Jennings, were Ann and Helen, daughters of William, third Lord Vaux of Harrowden. Ann was a single woman; Helen a wedded wife. 'Mrs. Perkins'

had no other relation to 'Mr. Perkins' than that of a penitent to her priest. No ties of blood connected the ladies with 'Mr. Mese.' Helen was not Mrs. Jennings; nor was the small creature who called himself Jennings a merchant from the City. The bald pate belonged to Bartholomew Brooksby, a country gentleman of good estate and of little wit, who had given himself body and soul to work out the Prefect's will. He was allowed to pay most of the rent for White Webbs.

Lord Vaux, the father of these two ladies, had been a grievous sufferer for conscience-sake. No small part of his life had been spent in jails, and no small part of his fortune had been lost in fines. For more than two years he had lodged in the Fleet prison, in company with Sir Thomas Tresham, whose sister he married on his first wife's death. He had seen his family broken up, and the honours of his line renounced. For his eldest son, Henry Vaux, had been persuaded by the Jesuits to lay down his name and title, to assume the higher mission of the cross. This heir to a noble name and good estate had thrown away all his worldly advantages to enter a foreign cell and to die a monk. Nor was this all that he had to bear. His second son, George Vaux, now heir to his

honours, had almost broken his heart by marrying against his wish, and family strife had embittered his later days. Lord Vaux outlived his sons—he quarrelled with his connexions—and, when he died, he left the honours of his house to a child not seven years old, the son of a woman whom he could not bear. Ann Vaux and Helen Brooksby were the aunts to this young peer.

White Webbs was called a seraglio; a child was born there; Helen Brooksby's child; and when Sir Edward Coke got the papers into his hands, he made coarse allusion to the paternity of this child. Garnet confessed that he was the christener; Coke demanded to be told whether he was not the father? The baby was said to have a bald head; Coke requested to know whether it had not a 'shaven crown?' From these impertinences it is easier to defend the Prefect than from the accusations of Father Floyd. Griffith Floyd, a Jesuit agent, was sent to England by his superiors to inquire into the life which Garnet had been leading at White Webbs, especially as to his love of dainty food, and his alleged familiarities with Mistress Ann. He told his masters that he had 'found too much.' The words are somewhat vague; they were meant

to damage Garnet; but we must not follow them from what they describe to what they merely hint. No proof exists of an immoral intimacy. If Garnet felt a love for either Ann Vaux or Helen Brooksby beyond what is allowed to a priest for every soul committed to his care, he never put that love into written words. But while he may be acquitted of criminal passion for his fair penitents, he must be held responsible for all the scandals piled upon their names. He led them into a false position, and he kept them in that false position before the world. They were not nuns. They had taken no vows. They lay under no female rule. One of them was a married woman. In living under the same roof with two single men, in passing under false names, in pretending to a near relationship of blood, and in assuming a condition to which they had no right, they laid themselves open to jests and sneers from which they ought to have been saved by more prudent friends. Garnet had not the grace to act a more manly part. He loved the soft ways of these high-born women, and rather than forego the pleasure of their company he was willing to darken and blight their fame.

To this lonely house in the royal demesne

came other Jesuits besides Oldcorne, other laymen besides Bartholomew Brooksby. Father Fisher, Father Gerard, and Father Greenway, were often there; coming in a score of varying names and garbs. Besides the lay characters which they assumed, each Jesuit had three or four priestly names, so as to be known to the servants of different houses as different persons. Fisher was called Father Percy in one place, Father Fairfax in a second. Gerard was known as Father Standish, Father Brooke, and Father Lee; Greenway as Father Greenwell and Father Tesmond. All these emissaries moved about the country, passing from house to house, saying mass in secret, raking up the fires of discontent, and keeping alive in their scholars the prospect of a change.

Lay visitors came to the lonely house.

After the death of Essex on Tower Hill, the men who were out with him in the streets, and were afterwards pardoned by the Queen, came over to consult the Jesuits as to what should be done. The first of these lay visitors were Robert Catesby and a companion whom he called Tom. Catesby was a young gentleman; tall, handsome, well bred, with a presence which took the eye; his blood being gentle, and his bearing that of

a prince. Early converted from his church, early united to a Protestant wife, early left a widower with an infant son, early engaged in treason to his Queen, he had passed through many lives, and was a worn-out sage before he was thirty years old. The companion whom he called Tom, and who addressed him in reply as Sir, was a dumpy little fellow of middle age, with person and manner exceedingly unlike those of his handsome friend. They asked for Mr. Mese.

The dumpy fellow had just come back from Rome, to which city he had been sent by the Fathers on a secret errand; and having conversed with Persons at the English college, he could explain to the company at White Webbs the latest views of the political exiles at the Roman court.

Other visitors came; not in crowds, but in twos and threes, so as to pass unnoticed in the Chase. Catesby was strict in his own coming and going; riding out either alone, or with his dumpy friend. As a rule, the callers gave no names; they wanted Mr. Mese; and they were shown by Skinner into Mr. Mese's room.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRIESTS' PLOT.

THE men of his own church whom Garnet, as chief of the Anglo-Spanish party, had most cause to fear, were two priests, William Watson and William Clarke, who were loud supporters of the old Catholic party against the new; writers of books on the Jesuits, and warm denouncers of the foreign school.

Having taught their flocks the duty of defending the soil, the freedom, and the sovereign of their native land, these priests were scouted by Father Persons as pedants and fools. To this attack Father Watson replied in a book called 'Ten Quodlibetical Questions;' from which title he got the droll nick-name of 'Quodlibets,' by which he has ever since been known. Of a good family, holding high office in the Church and State—a kinsman of that Thomas Watson who was Queen

Mary's Bishop of Lincoln—he regarded the new ideas preached by Persons and Garnet with the contempt of a Catholic of ancient lineage and unswerving faith. How, he asked himself, could these converts understand his church? What had they done, save vex the people and alarm the government? Loathing their creed, he felt no pity for the fate of Campion and Southwell; and he told the Catholics of Europe, in many a stinging phrase, that the Jesuits who were hung in London, suffered, not because they were servants of their church, but because they were traitors to their Queen. This view was the English view. In that luscious and ornate style which the clergy learned from the poets, Father Watson denounced the ambition of King Garnet and the turbulence of Emperor Persons; asserting that the angel faces, the flower of England's youth, the beauty of Britain's ocean, should never be appalled—nor the vermilion blush of English virgins—the modesty of married wives—and the matronhood of widows, put to shame either by Spanish plots or Spanish force. Persons replied to the Secular priest in his 'Manifestation,' a book disfigured by much bad English and much fierce invective; in which the Jesuit, in place of covering

the nakedness of his fellow priests, accused them of living in a state of drunkenness and uncleanness; nay, he went so far in vituperation, as to charge some of these reverend fathers with dicing, and others with stealing pewter pots.

Father Clarke, a man of higher gifts than Watson, answered this 'Manifestation,' in a 'Reply' of some reach and vigour; charging home upon the Jesuits, whom he accused of a design to overthrow all liberty of thought and action, even that of the Pope himself. It would have been well for the old Catholic clergy, if Father Clarke had been content with this victory of the pen, but, unfortunately for many besides himself, he conceived the idea of proving to Pope Clement that the old English clergy were a match for these vaunting Jesuits in political craft, no less than they were in literary power.

His friend Watson, one of the few priests of their party who had talked with James while he was yet in Scotland, pledged his word that Catholics would be favoured by the King. For saying so much in public, he was seized by Bancroft, Bishop of London; though the prelate changed his mind and set his prisoner free. When James came in, and day after day went by, and gave no sign,

the priest began to think he had been duped. On his asking for a fresh audience, the King replied, 'Since all the Protestants are for me, I have no need for the Papists.' Father Watson thought the King mistaken in that view; the Catholic hosts being like the summer stars for multitude; and he said the King must be made aware of a fact which he did not seem to know.

Taking Father Clarke into his councils, he found they were of one mind as to the policy of proving, by an open effort, how strong the Catholics were. Two advantages would grow out of such a course:—(1) the King would be frightened into doing right; and (2) the Jesuits, who fancied themselves the only plotters in the world, would be put to open shame. The second of these results would seem to have been regarded by the priests as much more precious than the first.

They meant the King no harm, except a little fright, and their project was to be carried out in the blaze of noon. A Catholic host was to be raised in London and the nearer shires; they were to ride good horses, to show their quality; they were to go forth and meet their King. They were to break upon him like an army in line of battle, to offer their petition of grievances, and, in a

frenzy of loyal ardour, to sweep him to the Tower. Surrounded in his palace by a court of Catholic peers, he would be only too willing to dismiss his Secretary, to dissolve his Council, to call new men into office, and openly return to the Church in which he had been baptized. The English Catholics would form his guard, while the Jesuits would be routed from the country as the enemies of God and man.

Such was the dream of these simple priests. But when they came to talk with their sober and conservative flock, they found that such a display of numbers could not be made. Here and there some reckless spirit might be tempted by the hope of plunder to join their ranks, but the busy farmers and fearful citizens were averse to public action of any sort. They wanted to live in peace. They saw no reason to believe the King was with them. They had much to lose by plots, and were slavishly devoted to the maintenance of public law. Not yet reading the moral of their failure, the two priests turned elsewhere for aid, and in these new walks their feet began to slide.

Dining with Duke Humphrey in St. Paul's, rousing in the taverns of Carter Lane, were hosts of stout fellows, who might be willing to mount a good horse on the chance of getting a fat purse,

not to speak of such tempting baits as a place at court. One such fellow was Sir Griffin Markham, of Beskwood Park, a knight who had smelt powder in the Low-Country camps, but having lost his commission was now dawdling away his time between the confessional, the tavern, and the stews. For the moment he was much excited against Lord Rutland, the young kinsman of Essex, from whom he had suffered some slight; and Father Watson, finding him in a sullen mood, suggested that the nearest way to his revenge upon that proud young spark was through the chances offered by this plot. Markham snapped at the golden bait; but this broken hero bargained for substantial favour; and before he pledged his sword to Watson he stipulated that, on a Catholic ministry being formed by the King, *he* was to have the Secretary's place!

The next fellow to be gained was Anthony Copley, a kinsman of Southwell. At fifteen years of age Copley had left England for Rome, where he accepted a bed and platter in the Jesuits' college, with a pension of ten crowns a-year from the Pope. From Rome he passed into Flanders, where Father Owen obtained for him a pension of twenty crowns from the Prince of Parma, in whose service he

remained, fighting against his Queen, until he sickened of the Jesuits, when he returned to London and procured a pardon from Burghley on expressing his eagerness for instruction in a better creed. From that time he had been much abused by Persons, though he had never ceased to be a member of his church. Hating the men at White Webbs, Copley came into Watson's plans, on the simple promise that those Jesuit intriguers were to be put to open shame.

In his first confession Copley boasted that those Jesuits were kept in ignorance of his plot; Watson thought the same; but this impression was a great mistake. A dozen members had not been told of their purpose, before Garnet, jealous and amused, had placed an agent at their board to learn their object and betray them to the law. That agent was Brooksby, whom Garnet set to watch the priests, while his wife Helen remained in her false name and false character beneath the Jesuit's roof.

The parts in this comedy of intrigue being cast, the comedians met in a tavern behind Paul's churchyard, to wrangle, over pots of ale, about the strength of parties in the court. High names were mentioned in these pot-house meet-

ings; the names of Raleigh, Nottingham, Windsor; but no one spoke of intercourse with these great persons, since no one in the room pretended to know them, except by sight. The scheme for a great display of Catholic strength not only failed, but failed at once; for not a single lay Catholic of name and weight could be induced to join.

The comedy was played out, when Father Watson one day met in the street George Brooke, a man of birth, a brother of Lord Cobham, a brother-in-law of Cecil, having friends among those Puritan and patriotic gentry who were anxious to relieve Ostend. Brooke knew Lord Grey. A disappointed man, ill-used by Cecil, Brooke lay open to the tempter's voice; and as he listened to Father Watson's talk, he fancied that he saw some chance of crossing Cecil by this plan of waylaying and frightening James, if only Grey and some others could be got to help. Father Watson begged him to see what could be done.

Calling at Grey's house, on the pretence of mourning with him over the ruin of God's cause in London as well as on the Flemish coast, Brooke hinted that James had been deceived by Cecil as to the facts of public opinion, and asked

whether it might not be well for some gentlemen of birth to lay a humble statement of the case before the King? Grey thought it would be well. James was at Greenwich. Such a statement, Brooke suggested, might be offered to the King as he rode from that place to Windsor Castle; but offered to him openly, in the light of noon, so that all the world might see how many gentlemen of rank and fortune held their views. For such a purpose, Grey said he could muster a hundred gentlemen of the best blood in England in a single day. Secure so far, Brooke asked whether Grey saw any objection to the old Catholic gentry, who had fought with them a common battle against the Jesuits, offering a petition of their own? Grey saw none.

A few days later, Brooke called on Grey again, bringing with him Markham, as one of those Catholic gentlemen who wished to have their grievances made known. These men had other plans, which they could not explain to Grey. They hoped to change the Government; in order to change the Government they must seize the King; and they could only seize the King by fighting with his guard. Alone, they could not venture on such a fight. Could Grey and his

friends be tempted into offering them the chances of a fray? If swords were drawn, no man could tell where the broil might end. In a sudden tumult, every one could strike for himself, and on a cry being raised of 'To the Tower!' the whole body of riders might be swept along, in a panic of fear, under the guidance of a few strong spirits who knew their minds. Could Grey be tempted?

Brooke, who seemed as though he had only come for instructions, asked the young general what must be done in case the King's guard set on them? Grey only smiled; the guard was not likely to attack a body of gentlemen in holiday attire. Still, urged Brooke, they might draw their swords in error and in panic. Suppose they drew; must the gentlemen stand on their defence? 'No,' answered Grey at once; under no alarm could he suffer his friends to draw on the royal escort.

Such an answer left the dreamers without a hope; but Watson, falling deeper into treason every hour, thought otherwise. He saw his way, and felt his ground. If Grey would raise his friends and meet the King, that fact should be enough. A new plan could be built upon the old; for the priest could now speak to his loyal and

conservative flock in a voice which they would understand.

Fired with his new purpose, he ran to the house of Sir Edward Parham, a strict old Somersetshire Catholic, whose sword was keen as his wit was dull. 'Quodlibets' told this gentleman, as a secret, that the new King was more than half converted to their faith, that many of his councillors heard mass, and that Pope Clement enjoined his children to guard their prince. Guard him from what? Then Watson whispered in his ear the still more perilous secret that Lord Grey and a gang of Puritan wretches were about to waylay their King, to seize his royal person, and to separate him from the devoted servants of his church. Out of pure affection he offered to Parham a golden chance. If he could silently and swiftly raise his Catholic friends — who would promptly arm in such a cause — he might be able to win such favour and fortune as Ramsay had won in Gowrie house; for when those Puritan rascals pricked up in the Surrey lane, he could rush upon them, rescue his prince from danger, and carry him to his palace in the Tower. All that being promptly done, they could then fall at his Majesty's feet and ask him to do them reli-

gious justice. What grace could the King refuse to men who had saved his life?

Parham, burning to become a hero of the court like Ramsay, pledged his help. Yet the plot was hardly now complete. To give Parham his cue there must be some appearance of attack. How could a scuffle be brought about? Could Grey be induced to admit Markham, Copley, and a few other Catholics in his train? If so, all would be well; for a kick of Copley's horse might raise a dust, a snap of Markham's pistol might raise a cry; the King would be sure to faint, the guards would probably charge, and the Puritan gentry might be trusted to draw their swords. Then, and then only, would be Parham's time.

Markham went down with Brooke to Lord Grey's house; but Grey would not listen to his prayer. If the Catholics wished to speak, let them do so, he said, another time in another place. Sir Griffin hinted that the Catholic gentlemen might go to meet the King, whether Grey approved their course or not. In that case, Grey announced that he should not go at all. The conference then broke up; and seeing that for the present no good was to be done at court,

Grey crossed the sea to Sluys, in the hope of either finding his way into Ostend or doing some better service to the Dutch.

This departure of Grey from London killed the comedy and brought the curtain down. James rode in peace from Greenwich to Windsor Castle; and then the Jesuits, after hearing a full report from Brooksby of what had been said and done by the plotters, sent Father Barneby, a creature whom they made their tool, to the house of Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, to denounce the plot and to say where Copley might be seized.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILTON COURT.

A PLOT in the air—a dream in the cloister—a comedy in the tap-room—a scheme which, dying in the throes of birth, could have no public history, was no bad stuff for men like Cecil and Northampton to recast and shape. The secresy and folly were in their favour. Grey had been consulted; and among the names which had been bandied about in Carter Lane was that of Raleigh. Striking for place and power, the subtle minister and his hoary pander had many motives, personal and political, for pushing their advantage to the last. White Webbs would laugh at the trouble of Watson and Clarke; the English college in Rome rejoice over the ruin of Copley; the Cardinal Archduke give thanks for the arrest of Grey. George Brooke was the brother and heir of Cobham; these two lives were all that

stood between William Cecil, now Lord Cranborne, and a vast estate; and Cranborne was already promised in marriage to Northampton's niece. They put the case into the hands of Coke.

On Copley's first confession, Markham, Watson, Clarke, and Brooke, were thrown into the Tower. Parham the dupe, and Brooksby the spy, were lodged in the Gate house, near Cecil's lodgings in Whitehall. Barneby, the priestly informer, having nothing more to tell, was hidden in the Clink. Not many days elapsed before it was rumoured at Paul's Cross that Grey was in close arrest at Sluys, and not many more went by before the young Puritan peer was brought in a war ship to the Tower.

Coke's brief against the prisoners was a work of legal art. Out of Barneby's report and Copley's confession, he wove an appearance of three plots, which he proposed to call—

I. The Spanish Treason.
II. The Surprising Treason.
III. The Priests' Treason.

For the trial of these conspiracies, he proposed to have separate courts, so as to give each trial its due importance in the public eye. In the Spanish Treason he indicted Count Aremberg,

the Archduke's minister, together with Raleigh, Cobham, Grey, and Brooke, on a charge of plotting to deprive the King, and to raise his royal cousin, the Lady Arabella Stuart, to his throne. In the Surprising Treason, he indicted Grey and Brooke, on a charge of conspiring to waylay and surprise the King as he rode from Greenwich to Windsor Castle. In the Priests' Treason, he indicted Markham, Copley, Parham, Watson, Clarke, and Brooke, on a charge of conspiring to change the Government by force. Much was withheld from Coke. Nothing was said to him about the peace with Spain; but enough was hinted to tell him that Brooke must die. Hence, the luckless uncle of Cecil's son was included as a principal in every charge.

Cecil spoke, though in vague, suspicious phrase, of the whole affair as the Arabella Plot, and his creature Coke tried hard to include Lord Grey in a second charge. It had been often bruited through the town that Grey would marry the Lady Arabella; and if Coke could show that Grey had ever entertained this project, he could lay him open to proceedings under the Royal Marriage Act. Cobham, who was said to have recommended such a match, was questioned in the

Tower, but his examination ended without supplying evidence fit to be adduced in court.

While these prisoners lay in the Tower, awaiting trial, Don Juan de Taxis, Conde de Villa Medina, arrived from Spain. Don Juan's master wanted peace. Peace was worth to him more than a hundred thousand crowns a-year, and this great sum of money his agent was empowered to spend in corrupting James's court. The wealth of two Indies flowed from the Ambassador's bounteous palm. Gems, feathers, perfumes, rained upon councillors' wives and on women who were thought to be more charming than their wives. In a month, Don Juan was the rage. Every one courted him, every one swore by him. Fine ladies, rustling in the silks of Seville, and pale with the pearls of Margarita, voted him the most perfect gallant they had ever met. The Countess of Suffolk, as Cecil's most confidential friend, was the prime object of Don Juan's courtesies. The great house, then rising at Charing Cross, was said, in reference to these gifts, to be plated with King Philip's gold.

Much of Don Juan's money passed into Cecil's pocket; for the minister knew the worth of peace to Spain, and when he sold his country to a

foreigner, his pride compelled him to sell her at a noble rate. Don Juan could not dispute his terms. 'Buy others cheap—pay Cecil all he asks,' was the substance, though not the form, of Don Juan's daily message from Madrid. Cecil named his price —a king's ransom down in gold, and a yearly pension to be paid for life.

Northampton and Suffolk also obtained the most princely sums. When the terms of peace had been settled, Coke received an order from the Council to unmake his plots, and cast his materials into other shapes. The charge against Aremberg must be withdrawn, and the Spanish Treason must disappear. Coke must have been deeply hurt, for the brief which he had drawn was a triumph of legal art. When he began afresh, he remembered Cecil's phrase of the Arabella Plot, and he cast his confessions into a shape that would support the theory of such a conspiracy. But as neither Copley nor the priests had mentioned this lady's name, he was told even now, at the ninth hour, to drop her name, and to divide the plot into two new parts. When his brief was drawn, the plot consisted of the Main and the Bye. Raleigh was in the Main—Grey was in the Bye—Brooke was in both the Main and the Bye. One was a con-

spiracy to raise Arabella to the throne—the other was a conspiracy to change the government by force.

For reasons which can only now be guessed, the name of Grey was dropped at the last moment from the article charging Raleigh and Cobham with the Arabella Treason. Brooksby, not being sent to the Tower, expected to escape a trial; but unseen influences worked against the spy, who was carried down to Winchester like the rest, leaving his fair young wife at the Jesuits' lodgings at White Webbs.

The King rode down to Wilton Court, to be near the scene of trial; and in the quaint old house where Mary Sydney lived, and under the solemn cedars that her brother loved, gay pages fluttered, and wily courtiers mused; while the hardier gentlemen of the chamber leaped to horse and dashed into the neighbouring town.

Popham and Coke made very short work with the smaller fry of prisoners. A few hours sufficed for them to bully and condemn Brooke, Watson, Copley, Markham and Clarke. Parham was spared. Brooksby, though pleading that he joined the conspirators only to betray them, was condemned to die. Clarke alone showed

genuine courage. Having played his game and lost, his only trouble appeared to be that he, a man of order and of letters, should leave behind him a traitor's name.

Raleigh came up next—after Raleigh came up Cobham—and after Cobham, Grey. Grey was tried by his peers, some of them his personal enemies; one of them that Lord Southampton whom he had beaten in the public street. Dudley Carleton says that Southampton 'was mute before his face,' but spoke much against him when the lords 'retired to consult among themselves.' Lord Grey's defence was simple. If the thought of presenting a petition was high treason, he was guilty; if it were lawful, he was not guilty. To the charge of conspiring with Brooke and Markham to surprise the King, he offered his proud denial and defied the proof. Only thrice had he seen these men, and on the first suggestion of force being used he had peremptorily declined all further talk with them. The peers condemned him to die a traitor's death.

When asked if he had anything to urge why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, he answered—'Nothing.' The court was awed into deep, pathetic silence. After a pause, he

added, 'Yet, a word of Tacitus comes into my mind,—*Non eadem omnibus decora.* The house of Wilton have spent many lives in their prince's service. Grey cannot beg his life.'

Raleigh himself never passed that height; and the proud refusal of this young soldier of twenty-five to ask a pardon from the King amazed and fascinated James.

When Brooke was fallen by the axe, and the two priests were hung and quartered, the King made a fidgety secret as to whether he would go on or pause. Under the green trees and by the limpid streams of Wilton House two parties were contending night and day; the gentlemen who were fumbling the edge of Don Juan's gold, defending the verdicts passed and clamouring for what they called traitors' blood; while those who had kept their fingers free were crying out against the sentence as infamous, the witnesses as perjured, the peers as corrupt. The ladies were on the side of mercy; and all the prisoners were willing to ask for mercy, excepting Grey.

Pembroke sent to London for the Globe comedians, in order that the Teacher of his Age might help to infuse some mirth and tenderness

into the royal councils; and William Shakespeare's troop rode down to Wilton on this gracious errand. One play was given before the court; and there is reason to believe that play was 'Measure for Measure.' The play was new; composed that very fall, as the many allusions to events then passing prove—to the plague, to the war, to the expected peace, to the proclamation, to the revival of obsolete laws, to the razing of a certain class of houses in the suburbs. Such an expression as 'Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary's!' might have been heard in every street that summer; and the characters of Angelo and the Duke are but highly-coloured and flattering pictures of Cecil and the King. The play may have been written for the Wilton stage. That it was first produced before a courtly audience is clear from the text; not only from the passage on ladies' masks, but from the many allusions in it to James's easy nature and his great dislike to crowds. It may be safely gathered from the story of this play, that the noble lines,—

> 'Not the King's crown, nor the deputed sword,
> The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
> Becomes them with one half so good a grace
> As mercy does!'

were addressed from the stage of Wilton House to James.

The King, who had no poetry in his soul to be touched by noble phrases, caused the warrants to be drawn out and passed under the Great Seal, for the execution of Markham, Cobham, and Grey; and Tichborne, Governor of the Castle, received instructions to prepare a scaffold in Castle Yard, and strike off the conspirators' heads on Friday morning before ten o'clock. The Duke of Vienna could hardly have devised a vainer plot.

Friday morning came, and the party of clemency was in despair. The Wilton lawns were drenched with rain; the air was chill and raw; yet thousands of people swarmed from an early hour into the Saxon city; rolling over Castle Hill, choking up the city gates, spotting every balcony and roof with black; yeomen from the Sussex downs, gentry from the glebes and parks, pages and courtiers from Wilton House, possibly the Globe comedians, and the Globe poet himself. James was to prove himself that day a greater comedian than any in that famous troop.

Sitting in his room at Wilton House, the King called to his side a lad named John Gibbs, then raw from Scotland, barely able to make himself

understood in English speech. The lad's face was unknown to Tichborne; that was the point of the King's joke; the fact out of which was to leap his great surprise. James put a paper into his hand, and bade him ride over to Winchester Castle, where he was to watch the proceedings until the axe was being raised to strike, when he was to rush into the ring, draw Tichborne aside, and show him the royal mandate. When the lad was gone, the King remembered that in his haste he had forgotten to sign his name. Riders flew after Gibbs, and brought him back, and the fault being mended, the Scotch lad dashed over the downs to Winchester, where he found the Castle yard crowded with Tichborne's men. These fellows pushed him back into the crowd; deaf to his cries, impatient of his Scottish twang; so that while the headsman was getting ready, Gibbs had to hang about the gate, fretting at the pikemen, and hoping that some one would arrive who would know his face, and understand his tale.

Markham was brought out first to die; and after saying a short prayer, he was bending his neck to the stroke, when a quick cry from the crowd caught the sheriff's ear. Gibbs had found Sir James Hay, who cut a path for him to Tich-

borne's side. In a moment the seal was broken, and Tichborne learnt, under the King's own hand, that the prisoners were to be put—as it were—to the axe; but only in sport: and when they had been frightened to death, were to be told that the King had been graciously pleased to spare their lives. Having read these strange commands, the sheriff told Markham to stand aside.

Grey came out next—his footfall firm, his eye elate, his expression proud and gentle; for he had supped as well and slept as softly as he could have done at Whaddon Hall. A band of youthful nobles, few of them younger—none of them nobler than himself, marched with him from his cell to the Castle yard. Gay in his attire, as though the block to which he was going were a bridal board, his countenance bright with unearthly joy, he passed through the kneeling lines—the only man, perhaps, whose pulse beat calmly in all that quivering throng. Dropping softly at the headsman's feet, he poured out his soul in prayer; and when he had made his peace with God, he confessed his sins in the face of man, admitting his many offences, but haughtily putting away from him the stain of crime. The rain fell fast; but the crowd stood sadly in the Castle

yard. From his prison window Raleigh was looking on. Grey made his sign; for the pang of death was passed; and he laid his neck for the lifted steel. Then Tichborne broke upon his peace. An error, said the sheriff, had crept into their proceedings; Cobham must die first, and Grey must abide for an hour in the hall.

When the ghastly comedy was played out the three prisoners were ranked in the Castle yard, face to face; Tichborne read the King's letter of reprieve; and the people threw up their caps and cried 'Well done!'

CHAPTER IX.

LAST OF A NOBLE LINE.

THE prisoners spared at Winchester were brought in time to the Tower; but only the three great ones were confined beyond the year. Within a few weeks Copley and Brooksby were pardoned and restored in blood. Markham was set free, on the sole condition of his going to live abroad; and Barneby was paid his wages and sent away. Raleigh and Cobham were left in the Tower, that Philip might be easy in his mind, and that Cecil might receive the rents from a large estate.

On his first return to the Tower, Lord Grey was miserably housed by the Lieutenant, Sir George Harvey, a man suspected by the court, and eager to regain the Secretary's good opinion. Grey complained to Cecil, who still professed to wish him well, and who was never harsh, like Northampton, beyond his need. Cecil stood his friend so far; and on a hint from court that

though Grey must be kept in safety, he need not be kept in torment, Harvey remembered that he had an empty room in the Brick tower, Sir George Carew's official apartment; a tower which had been Raleigh's first prison, and was afterwards to be his last. This house stood on the northern wall, above the ditch. It was high and cold. As Sir George Carew was never in residence, the rooms were empty and unused; and Harvey, fearing that Grey would still object, informed his master that prisoners had been put into that tower in Peyton's time. Hither, then, Lord Grey was brought; and in this gloomy tower he spent the next nine years of his feverish life.

Eight pounds a-week were allowed him out of his great estate. He was suffered to write to his mother and sister, and his servants were allowed in ordinary times to wait upon him. But his condition changed with the seasons and lieutenants. Generally his imprisonment was close and his treatment harsh. One likes to know the effect of gloom and chains, of damp and silence, on so proud a spirit. The old, old story comes up again:—they broke his health; and when they had ruined his health, they easily broke his heart. The man who could not be induced to

beg for life, was worn into begging fretfully for such poor freedom as the liberties of the Tower!

Yet there was nothing mean in Grey from first to last. If his life in the Brick tower had not the beauty of Raleigh's life in the Garden house, it had a nobleness all his own. In his younger days, he had amused his leisure by translating St. Cyprian's tract on 'Patience,' and when he found himself a prisoner in the Tower, he sent to his mother for his book, and asked that his boy might come to him and read for him. Cecil moved the King to grant him so much favour; but the King was in no mood to comply. 'I beseech you,' Grey wrote again, 'to move the King for my scholar, who will yield me much comfort.' When the request was granted, it was only on condition that the reader should occupy the same room with his lord, and should never leave it.

In his letters to his mother, Grey seemed more anxious to remove any lurking seeds of suspicion about his loyalty from her mind, than to engage her in efforts for his worldly good. 'Madam,' he writes, 'be not dismayed. I am in the Tower, but neither for thought nor deed against King and country.' Again he writes to her: 'I fear

not evil. My heart is fixed. I trust in the Lord.'

Grey found it hard to be patient in the Brick tower, while Ostend was calling to him, as he thought, for help. The peace with Spain was a sore trial to his spirit, though he fancied that the terms of that peace would allow him to take service in the patriotic army. Markham had been suffered to serve under the Archduke, and he counted on the same indulgence in his own relations with the Prince of Orange. Then came the fall of Ostend.

While his old commander, Vere, remained in the Low Countries, he hoped against hope; but when that veteran was recalled by James, his big heart almost burst with rage. 'No one accident,' he wrote to his friend Winwood, a Puritan like himself, a partisan of the Dutch like himself, 'hath so much grieved me as this of Vere, that he should forsake the Low Country employment, when my misfortune hath made me so unavailable.'

There lay the core of his offence. Grey longed to be in the field, fighting against the enemies of his country and his faith; and the courtiers at Whitehall were earning pensions by

preventing men like himself from offering their swords to the insurgent Dutch. Like Raleigh, Grey was the prisoner of Spain.

Years dragged on; but the pensions of Cecil and Northampton being duly paid, the prisoner lay in his lonely tower above the ditch.

At length, the war itself wore out; the Dutch republic was acknowledged; the twelve years' truce was signed; and the cause of their savage watch on Grey was in some degree removed. Yet year on year went by without a change. At length Northampton affected to remember Grey. He went down to the Tower, and saw his comrade of the court. The prisoner asked for leave to walk on the terrace, under the Ordnance house, for the benefit of his health; a liberty which Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Northumberland then enjoyed. This indulgence was refused, but a change was made in his lodgings, from the gloomy Brick tower on the northern wall, to the cheery Water gate on the Thames. Grey fancied that Northampton had become his friend, after being for so many years his foe. The Earl was never to be feared so much as when he appeared to be doing good.

William Seymour (afterwards Duke of Somer-

set) had just escaped from the Water gate; and his wife, the Lady Arabella, had been ordered to the Tower. Thus, the Lady who had been Grey's unwitting demon, was once more brought within his range; and through the treacherous courtesies of Northampton, the evil of his younger time repeated itself in his desolate cell. The royal lady lay in the Belfry and the Lieutenant's house; their prisons were therefore near each other. One of Arabella's women contrived to see Grey in the Water gate, and his lordship was accused of sending love-messages to the royal lady. Grey denied it; turning the affair into an act of innocent flirting with her maid; but the rumour served Northampton's purpose; for the King became alarmed at what he supposed to be a new intrigue; the chance of pardon for the lady vanished; and Grey was ordered into close confinement in his tower.

This rank injustice broke his spirit.

In this Water gate the last Lord Grey of Wilton died, in the summer of 1614, eleven years after his first arrest in Sluys; leaving a mother, who quickly followed her noble and gallant son, and a sister, from whom descend the Grey-

Egertons, now the sole representatives of Arthur and Sibyl Grey.

> Inexorable Death in this sole stroke
> Had lopt the laurel and hewn down the oak.

Yet brief as were his days in the Tower, Grey long outlived the Jesuit schemer of White Webbs.

CHAPTER X.

POWDER-PLOT ROOM.

ONE chamber in the Lieutenant's house has a life apart from the rest; a chamber on the upper tier, built on the old wall, with oaken panels, and a window opening on the Thames. In a house of no great size, this room looks large, and the window in it is high and wide. No one could mistake it for a prisoner's cell; yet this chamber on the old wall is almost as famous in English story as the Belfry and the Bloody tower. The mantel-piece shows a royal bust; the wall is plated with records from a royal pen. Round the cornice, are the shields of some of our noblest families; Howards, Somersets, Cecils, Humes and Blounts. The bust, though stained to look like bronze, is carved in wood; while the

panels are laden with much latinity and many historic lies.

The wooden head is that of James the First, the lying record is that of the Powder Plot.

James used to speak of the Powder Plot as his master-piece; a term which might be taken to hint that the King had worked it out from his own fancy, much as Cecil had worked out the Arabella Plot. But this could not have been his meaning. James had neither the wit to conceive, nor the steadiness to control, such a scheme of political vengeance. The plot was an actual plot, with living agents and a settled plan. Yet the dreamers who ascribe this plot, in general terms, to the Catholic clergy and laity, go further astray from fact than the dreamers who ascribe it to King James.

The plot was not a Catholic plot.

This wild project of political murder was the work of a few converts from the English Church, conducted by a gang of outlaws and fanatics, not only against the conscience, but against the interest, of every Catholic in the realm. The Pope condemned it. The Archpriest condemned it. All the Secular priests and all their sober flocks con-

demned it. What these children of St. Edward and St. Thomas had to do with the Powder Plot, was to bear, during many reigns, under protests which were seldom heard, the social odium and political penalty of a crime which they abhorred.

Nor was this project properly a Jesuit crime. It found some friends in the Order of Jesus beyond a doubt; but these friends of the Powder Plot were of no high standing in the body, and the society, as a society, gave them no support. Not one, but many, of the more eminent fathers fought against the scheme. The General, Claudius Aquaviva, set his face against the plotters, when he could only guess their purpose, and when the details reached him, just as he was entering on the festival of Christmas, the noble old man was smitten to the heart.

Those who throw the blame on Catholics miss the great moral of the crime.

The men who contrived, the men who prepared, the men who sanctioned, this scheme of assassination were, one and all, of Protestant birth. Father Persons was Protestant born. Father Owen and Father Garnet were Protestants born. From what is known of Winter's early life, it may be

assumed that he was a Protestant. Catesby and Wright had been Protestant boys. Guy Fawkes had been a Protestant, Percy had been a Protestant. The minor persons were like their chiefs—apostates from their early faith, with the moody weakness which is an apostate's inspiration and his curse. Tresham was a convert—Monteagle was a convert—Digby was a convert. Thomas Morgan, Robert Kay, and Kit Wright, were all converts. The five gentlemen who dug the mine in Palace-yard, were all of English blood and of Protestant birth. But they were converts and fanatics, observing no law save that of their own passions; men of whom it should be said, in justice to all religions, that they no more disgraced the church which they entered than that which they had left.

The plot was the main clerical effort of that Spanish conspiracy against English law which the converted Jesuits had been trained to conduct; a political conflict in which these English Jesuits appealed to the sword and perished by the sword.

The first panel on the wall, a pious prayer, Pagan in form, yet far from classical in style, sets forth the virtues and dignities of those who were to have suffered in the explosion:

JACOBVS MAGNVS MAGNÆ BRITANIÆ
REX, PIETATE, JVSTITIA, PRVDENTIA, DOCTRINA, FORTITVDINE,
CLEMENTIA, CETERISQ. VIRTVTIBVS REGIIS CLARISS'; CHRISTIANÆ
FIDEI, SALVTIS PUBLICÆ, PACIS VNIVERSALIS PROPVGNATOR, FAVTOR,
AVCTOR ACERRIMVS, AVGVSTISS', AVSPICATISS'.
ANNA REGINA FREDERICI 2. DANORV REGIS INVICTISS FILIA SERENISS
HENRICVS PRINCEPS, NATVRÆ ORNAMENTIS, DOCTRINÆ PRÆSIDIIS
GRATIÆ MVNERIBVS, INSTRVCTISS'; NOBIS & NATVS &
A DEO DATVS.
CAROLVS DVX EBORACENSIS DIVINA AD OMNEM VIRTVTEM INDOLE.
ELIZABETHA VTRIVSQ. SOROR GERMANA, VTROQVE PARENTE,
DIGNISSIMA.
HOS, VELVT PVPILLAM OCVLI TENELLAM
PROVIDVS MVNI; PROCVL IMPIORVM
IMPETV ALARVM TVARVM INTREPIDOS
CONDE SVB VMBRA.

No one but James was likely to have penned this invocation; in English thus:

'James the Great, King of Great Britain, Illustrious for piety, justice, foresight, learning, hardihood, clemency, and the other regal virtues; champion and patron of the Christian faith; of the public safety, and of universal peace; author most subtle, most august, and most auspicious:

'Queen Ann, the most serene daughter of Frederick the Second, invincible King of the Danes:

'Prince Henry, ornament of nature, strengthened with learning, blest with grace, born and given to us from God:

'Charles, Duke of York, divinely disposed to every virtue:

'Elizabeth, full sister of both; most worthy of her parents:

'Do Thou, all-seeing, protect these as the apple of the eye, and guard them without fear from wicked men beneath the shadow of Thy wings.'

Then comes a list of Lords Commissioners, followed by the chief panel of the series, in more pretentious and much worse Latin than the first. This panel, the work of Sir William Waad, contains the following votive offering from the King's Lieutenant of the Tower:

DEO OPT: MAX: TRIVNO, SOSPITATORI, &
TANTÆ, TAM ATROCIS, TAMQ. INCREDIBILIS IN REGEM
LEMENTISS; IN REGINAM SERENISS': IN DIVINÆ INDOLIS & OPTIMÆ SPEI PRINCIPEM, CÆTERAMQ. PROGENIEM REGIAM, ET IN OMNEM OMNIUM ORDINEM, & NOBILITATIS ANTIQUÆ, & FORTITUDINIS AVITÆ ET PIETATIS CASTISSIMÆ, & JUSTITIÆ SANCTISSIMÆ FLOREM PRÆCIPVUM, CONJURATIONIS EXEQUENDÆ NITROSI PULVERIS SVBJECTI INFLAMMATIONE, CHRISTIANÆ VERÆQ. RELIGIONIS EXTINGVENDÆ FVRIOSA LIBIDINE, ET REGNI STIRPITUS EVERTENDI NEFARIA CVPIDITATE, A JESUITIS ROMANENSIBUS PERFIDÆ CATHOLICÆ & IMPIETATIS VIPERINÆ AVTORIBUS & ASSERTORIBUS, ALIISQ. EJUSDEM AMENTIÆ SCELERISQ. PATRATORIBUS & SOCIIS SVSCEPTÆ & IN IPSO PESTIS DEREPENTÆ INFERENDÆ ARTICULO (SALUTIS ANNO + 1605 + MENSIS NOVEMBRIS DIE QUINTO) TAM PRÆTER SPEM, QUAM SUPRA FIDEM MIRIFICE ET DIVINITUS DETECTÆ AVERRVNCO, ET VINDICI, GRATES QUANTAS ANIMI CAPERE POSSENT MAXIMAS ET IMMORTALES A NOBIS OMNIBUS, ET POSTERIS NOSTRIS HABERE ET AGI GVLIELMUS WAADE MILES TVRRI A DOMINO REGE PRÆFECTUS, POSITO PERPETUO
HOC MONUMENTO VOLVIT, DIE NONO MENSIS
OCTB. ANNO REGNI JACOBI PRIME SEXTO
AÑO DÑI 1608.

In English thus:

'To Almighty God, the guardian, arrester, and avenger,—who has punished this great and incredible conspiracy against our most merciful lord the King, our most serene lady the Queen, our divinely-disposed Prince, and the rest of our royal house, and against all persons of quality, our ancient nobility, our soldiers, prelates, and judges; the authors and advocates of which conspiracy, Romanized Jesuits, of perfidious, Catholic, and serpent-like ungodliness, with others equally criminal and insane, were moved by the furious desire of destroying the true Christian religion, and by the treasonous hope of overthrowing the kingdom, root and branch; and which was suddenly, wonderfully, and divinely detected, at the very moment when the ruin was impending, on the fifth day of November, in the year of grace, 1605,—William Waad, whom the King has appointed his Lieutenant of the Tower, returns, on the ninth of October, in the sixth year of the reign of James the First, 1608, his great and everlasting thanks.'

After this panel comes a third, containing a list of the conspirators' names, both clerical and lay,

with tags of pious verse and foolish appeals to gods and men.

These panels on the wall record a series of noticeable scenes.

About the hour of noon, on a dark November day, in the year 1605, a very high company came down from Whitehall Palace to the Tower; men in whose sleepless eyes and troubled haste of speech a drama of unusual tension might be read. Sir William Waad, then new in office, met them by the gate; but the greeting which these great ones deigned to give their humble tool was scant. A small bent man, past middle age, with shuffling gait and furtive eyes, passed in, going quickly through the arch of that Bloody tower in which Raleigh was then confined, and straight across the Green to the new Lieutenant's house. The small bent man and three gallant personages who followed him had each a George upon his breast.

They met in this poor chamber on the wall to examine a prisoner then in the Tower, on a matter which would cause the place in which they sat to be called in all future times the Powder Plot Room.

Who these persons were may be read on these

panels—their names, their titles, and the offices they held—names which are familiar still, not by the Thames only, but in every zone of the earth in which our English speech is heard. In the chair sat Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, Secretary of State; and near him were Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral; Charles Blount, Earl of Devon, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, Lord Privy Seal. Is it too much to say that high as were the offices filled by these Knights of the Garter, the men had higher claims to notice than their official rank? Cecil was a son of Lord Burghley, a cousin of Sir Francis Bacon—Nottingham disputed with Raleigh the foremost place at sea—Mountjoy was hardly more renowned as the Pacificator of Ireland than as the friend of Sydney and the lover of Lady Rich—Northampton, the second and favourite son of Surrey, was a scholar, a writer, a speaker of the highest class.

Cecil laid before the lords a paper, drawn that very day (Tuesday, November 6), and written from first to last by the King's own pen. This paper, addressed to the Lords Commissioners for the Plot, directed certain peers and gentlemen, in

quaint old Scottish phrase, to question a prisoner then in the Tower, and to make him tell the truth by gentle means, if gentle means would serve; if not, by slinging him to the hook and binding him on the rack.

The man to be examined had been seized on the previous night, on the door-steps of a house in Parliament Place, under circumstances to excite the wildest terror. Dragged by armed men to Whitehall, and brought into the King's presence, he had been questioned by James himself, as to who he was and what he meant to do; to which questions he had answered with reckless devilry, that he was a poor serving-man, and that he meant to slay, by a sudden burst of powder, laid in a vault beneath the throne, the King and Queen, the young prince, the royal councillors and judges, with the principal persons of the court. Pressed still more, he had given his own name as John Johnson and his master's name as Thomas Percy, one of the King's Gentlemen Pensioners, a kinsman of the great northern Earl. Bandying jokes with the guard, this fellow had shown a savage scorn of life which all but fascinated James.

After he had left the presence, a letter had been found in his clothes; a letter written in

French, and by a lady's pen. This letter, found upon him open, was signed Elizabeth Vaux (the lady of Harrowden), and was addressed to him as Guido Fawkes.

At a sign from Cecil, Waad brought in his prisoner. Some of the lords, not all, had seen that face before; seen it for an hour, under the glare of fitful lamps, in the midst of scared, inquisitive eyes; when, roused from their beds, and hurried to Whitehall at midnight, they had heard from the royal lips a tale, the like of which courtiers have seldom been called to hear in the dead of night from kings. They had seen the black brow beetling over those fiery orbs, now sullen with rampant rage, now rippling with low, fierce laughter, as the King, seated on the edge of his bed, forced out in gasps and screams his version of the powder and the mine; and now, in the fog of a November noon, they looked on that face again.

CHAPTER XI.

GUY FAWKES.

A MAN to study with a curious art was the stiff, bronzed fellow, with sandy beard and fell of auburn hair, now standing in this Tudor room, before judges of such high fame and power, and answering these lords of war and masters of law as lightly as though the inquiry were some tavern jest; giving the false name of Johnson, the false description of a serving-man; and only laughing roughly when they found him out.

Tall, strongly built, and thirty-five years old, he stood before them in the prime of all his powers. His face was good, in some of its aspects fine. His tones were those of gentle life; his words, though few, were choice; and his bearing spoke of both the cloister and the camp. Despite the grime upon his hands, the grime of coal and powder, he was evidently a man of birth. Mountjoy could see that he had been a

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soldier; Northampton found him an adept in the schools. Even Cecil, who knew a good deal more about him than he liked to say, was smitten by his jaunty air.

'He is no more dismayed,' wrote the Secretary of State, 'than if he were taken for a poor robbery on the highway.' Not a dozen hours had yet passed by since he was seized in Parliament Place; seized in the very fact, with matches in his pocket, with a lantern behind the door, and in such guise and manner as made his conviction sure. All that could have happened to cross his purpose and crush his spirit had come to pass. His plans had failed, his friends were scattered, his cause was lost. Behind him lay the wreck of a life; before him lowered the jail, the rack, the gibbet, and the yelling crowd. All that he could call his own on earth, was a day of feverish pain, an infamous and cruel death, a memory laden with a lasting curse. Yet the man was rock. The lords had spent a sleepless night, and he had slumbered like a child. They had been tossing on beds of down, while he had been sleeping on a plait of straw. They had sought for rest in vain under painted ceilings, and he had been dreaming lightly in the darkest dungeon of the

Tower. The Lieutenant, coming early to his cell, had found him sleeping 'as a man void of trouble.' Not that he was cold and strong; still less that he was dark and subtle. The man was open, and even frank. He told the truth, so far as he meant to speak, at once. When he told a lie, he told it of fixed design; and rather to screen some brother in misfortune than to save himself. He was neither mercenary, nor inscrutable, nor heroic; he was simply a fanatic, with the vices and virtues which belong to a fanatic. Like nearly all fanatics, he was a convert to his faith, glowing with the zeal which sharpens a fakir's knife, and comforts a martyr at the stake. Fasting and observance had helped to drive him mad; until he felt, like many of those familiars of the Holy Office whom he had met in Antwerp and Madrid, that it was his duty to kill men's bodies on the chance of saving souls.

Cecil read the paper which he had received from James, a warrant containing sixteen questions to be put, with a power of compelling answers to these queries in case of need. This quaint old paper of instructions, which the lords must have had some sport in spelling through, may be given in the King's own form:

'This examinate wolde now be maid to ansoure to formall interrogatours.

'1 as quhat he is, for I can neuer yett heare of any man that knowis him.

'2 quhaire he uas borne,

'3 quhat uaire his parents names,

'4 quhat aage is he of,

'5 quhaire he hath liued,

'6 hou he hath liued and by quhat trade of lyfe,

'7 hou he ressaued those woundes in his breste,

'8 if he uas euer in seruice, uith any other before percie, and quhat thay uaire, and hou long,

'9 hou came he in percies seruice, by quhat meanes, and at quhat tyme,

'10 quhat tyme uas this house hyred by his maister,

'11 and hou soone after the possessing of it did he beginne to his deuillishe preparations,

'12 quhen and quhaire lernid he to speake frenshe,

'13 quhat gentle womans lettir it uas that uas founde upon him,

'14 and quhairfor doth she giue him an other name in it then he giues to him self,

'15 if he uas euer a papiste, and if so quho brocht him up in it,

'16 if other wayes, hou uas he conuertid, quhaire, quhen, and by quhom, this course of his lyfe I ame the more desyrouse to know, because I haue dyuers motiues leading me to suspecte that he hath remained long beyonde the seas, and ather is a preiste, or hath long seruid some preiste or fugitiue abroade, for I can yett (as I saide in the beginning heirof) meite with no man that knowis him, the letter found upon him giues him another name, and those that best knowis his meister can neuer remember to haue seene him in his companie, quhair upon it shoulde seeme that he hath bene reccomendit by some personnis to his maisters service only for this use, quhairin only, he hath servid him, and thairfore he uolde also be asked in quhat company and shippe he went out of englande, and the porte he shipped at, and the like quœstions wolde be asked anent the forme of his returne, as for these tromperie waires found upon him, the signification and use of euerie one of thaime wolde be knowin, and quat I have obseruid in thaim, the bearare will show you, nou laste, ye remember of the crewallie uillanouse pasquil that rayled upon me for the name of brittaine,

if I remember richt it spake some thing of haruest and prophecied my destruction about that tyme, ye maye thinke of this, for it is like to be the laboure of suche a desperate fellow as this is, if he will not other wayes confesse, the gentler tortours are to be first usid unto him et sic per gradus ad ima tenditur, and so god speede youre goode worke. 'JAMES R.'

These questions were put by Cecil, and the prisoner's answers were written down. His name was Johnson—he was born in Netherdale—his father was called Thomas, his mother Edith—he was thirty-six years old—he had lived in Yorkshire, Cambridge, and elsewhere—he had a farm of thirty pounds a-year—his scars came of a pleurisy—he had served no one but Percy—he had served him since Easter, 1604—his master had hired the house about Midsummer-twelvemonth—at Christmas last he had brought in the powder—he had learnt French in England, but improved it abroad—the letter was from a gentlewoman in Flanders—she called him Fawkes because he used to call himself so—he was brought up a Catholic—he was not a convert. Some of these replies were true; most of them were false.

Next morning, Wednesday, a sharper board of

inquisitors came down to the Tower, and sent for Fawkes into the Powder Plot Room. Northampton occupied the chair, assisted by the Lord Chief Justice Popham and Sir Edward Coke. If England had been raked from end to end, the mates of these three men, in craft of brain, in hardness of heart, could nowhere have been found. Fawkes soon felt that it was one thing to baffle soldiers like Nottingham and Mountjoy, another to fence with lawyers like Popham and Coke.

Northampton pointed to the rack, and told the prisoner to speak the truth, or he would tear it from his heart. To these new judges Fawkes confessed the facts, so far as they touched himself. His Christian name was Guy, his surname Fawkes. He was born in York, where his father, Edward Fawkes, had lived; but his father died about thirty years ago, leaving him a small estate, which he had spent. He took service with Percy under the name of Johnson, and by this name he was known in Parliament Place. He had sworn on the Primer never to betray his friends in the plot—he had taken the sacrament with that oath. Five was the original number, but five or six others had come in since. He was now sorry for what he

had tried to do; since he saw that God would not suffer it to be done. He was not a priest. He could not name his accomplices on account of his oath, and he would not say where he had sworn that oath. All the five plotters swore the same oath as himself: they swore it a year and a half ago. Some speech had been held amongst them, that they would free the prisoners from the Tower, that they would marry the King's daughter to a Catholic, and that they would raise her to the throne.

All these confessions made a good day's work, but after Northampton had left the Tower, Waad went down into Fawkes's cell, and, finding him full of talk, began to urge him, as he looked for grace, to set forth all that he knew of the plot from first to last; how the design arose, who were the agents, and what they proposed to do when the King was dead. Fawkes seemed touched in spirit; he had not yet been tortured; but the rack was before his eyes; and unless he gave up all his secrets the morrow would see him stretched. Waad left him that night in the belief that he would yield; but on his return to the cell next day a change had come upon the prisoner's mood. Fawkes would not speak, he would not write. Vexed at his stubborn

spirit, the Lieutenant called his men, and bound his prisoner to the rack. Fawkes may have thought that he could bear the pain and not cry out, but after thirty minutes of the cord and pulley, he gasped out faintly that he would tell them all he knew.

A first confession was taken down. The plot, he said, was a religious plot; he heard of it first from an English gentleman in Flanders; and he went on to describe the mine, the powder and the train. Later in the day, he made a more important statement. The pain had quelled his courage, and the man who would have faced a blazing mine could not resist the slow, cold agony of the cord. On the rack he gasped out names, addresses, details of many kinds. So much matter being gained, the Lieutenant spoke with him once more. Why not cleanse his bosom? What had the Jesuits been about? Who had given him the sacrament? Broken in nerve, the strong man yielded; but he could not be persuaded to write his shame. If the Earl of Salisbury would come to him, and come alone, he would tell him everything which it concerned his Majesty to learn. A messenger from Waad soon bore this news to court, and almost as quickly as horses could devour the road between

the Strand and the Tower, Cecil was closeted with Fawkes in the Powder Plot Room, listening to the first words from his lips which could be used in open court against his neighbours of White Webbs.

When these words were written down, the prisoner was asked to sign his name. He took up his pen, and essayed to write, but the quivering flesh refused to obey his will. 'Guido,' he wrote; the rest of his name he could not write. From that day forward silence on his part was vain; others besides himself were in arrest; some in the Tower—some in the Gate house—some in the Fleet—and then in gasps and spasms the singular facts of the Powder Plot came out.

But the story told in these gasps and spasms, may be given with less waste of words, in a closer form than that of a prisoner's record on the rack.

CHAPTER XII.

ORIGIN OF THE PLOT.

THE dumpy man called Tom, who rode so often to White Webbs with Mr. Catesby, was Thomas Winter, a younger brother of Robert Winter, a small Worcestershire Squire. A shrewd fellow, who had seen the world, both in courts and camps, this Tom could patter in many tongues, and was familiar with many lands. In his youth, he had fought against the King of Spain; but on falling under Jesuit influence, he had given up the cause of freedom and the profession of arms, to spend his middle age in the secret service of Lord Monteagle, whose pay he took and whose man he was called. Going hither and thither, from London to Brussels, from Madrid to Rome, he had borne the latest news from Father Persons and Father Cresswell to their friends in Flanders and at White Webbs; and generally he had earned

his wages by promoting that revolution which the Jesuits told his master would shortly come about.

Catesby and Tom had tried their luck in a street fight, with a royal favourite in their ranks, and having been crushed, condemned, and fined, were anxiously seeking some safer way to upset their Queen. What could they do? The people were against them. Even the Catholics were against them. While the citizens were loyal and the lords alert, rebellion was clearly a waste of blood. What then? They came for counsel to White Webbs.

'Mr. Mese' had strange news to tell them; for he had just received from Rome, where Persons was then the ruling spirit, two papal breves; one addressed to the Archpriest, George Blackwell, and the Catholic clergy; the other addressed to the nobility and commons; in which breves the children of Rome were enjoined, on their salvation, to admit no prince except such as the Pope should appoint to reign over them. These breves were not to be published until the Queen was dead; but Garnet showed them to Catesby, by whom they were shown to Lord Monteagle and his cousin Frank. Monteagle had a villa near Hoxton, from which he could easily ride over to White Webbs;

and Catesby hired a house in the same suburbs, at Moorcroft, under London Wall. These two gentlemen, seeing that such breves could never be enforced without foreign help, agreed with Father Garnet that two secret agents, one a Jesuit, the other a layman, should proceed at once to Madrid, with orders to find their way into the Duke de Lerma's cabinet, to assure that minister of Catholic support, and to urge that a Spanish army should be thrown upon these shores. Father Greenway was chosen by the Jesuits, Tom Winter by the laymen. Tom not only knew the country and spoke the language, but as a deserter from his flag was sure of a welcome from the monks and mistresses who governed Spain.

These secret agents were well received. Giving Lerma charts and maps of the English coast, they pointed out Milford Haven as the point where it would be best to land, as the Welsh people were Catholic, and a Spanish general, fortified in Pembroke, would have the friendly Irish at his back. But Lerma, though polite, was cold. The Queen was failing fast; a change must come; and his policy was the waiting game. This answer having been foreseen, Tom Winter had been told to urge upon the Duke that nothing

could be done with James, and that the King of Scots must be cut off, he and his progeny, root and branch, so as to open a passage for the Infanta to come in under the Papal breves. But Lerma, pursing his darksome brow, said only that his friends must wait.

Had he by any sign or shrug approved of Tom Winter's hint, that James should be cut off? We only know that Tom returned through Flanders, where he spread the latest news from Madrid; and that the policy of cutting off the King of Scots was from that time adopted in the cloister and in the camp. The very first batch of Fathers who came over in the Golden Lion talked openly of the King and all his house being speedily cut off. A priest sent word to Cecil that the duty of killing James was being canvassed in the English colleges of Cleves and Douai; and that two fanatics in holy orders had pledged their souls, if they might have the blessing of Heaven upon their deed, to cross the sea, gain access to his table, and stab him as he sat at meat.

On the day Elizabeth died, Catesby went about the town, watching events and eager for a sign; but in the afternoon he rode over to White Webbs, and told the Prefect that the new

King had been proclaimed, that every one was pleased, that the city bells were ringing, and the streets alive with bonfires. When Garnet heard this news, he took the Papal breves from his desk, as things too dangerous to be kept, and threw them on the fire.

In Rome another spirit ruled the hour. Persons told the Pope that now was the time for his children to strike a blow. The day for intrigue was past, the day for action come. The Catholics, he cried, were ready; they only waited for a sign; and at a word from Rome, a hundred thousand swords would flash into the air. The King of Scots had forfeited his right, and they must bar his entrance in the name of God and Holy Church. The cry which Persons raised in Rome, was echoed by Owen in Brussels, by Garnet in Enfield Chase. But the cry was not taken up, and the Jesuits dared not commit themselves by a publication of the breves. Opinion too, veered round in the Roman court, where Persons fell into suspicion; and, what was worse for Garnet, Frank Tresham and Lord Monteagle were inclined to act with Northampton in supporting James. A new course had to be fetched, and Catesby, finding a friend in Ambrose Roke-

wood, a young Suffolk squire, who had been trained in the Jesuits' college at St. Omer, consulted Garnet and Greenway on the policy of seeking in Madrid the support they could no longer find in Rome. Kit Wright, a reckless fellow, who had been out in the streets with Essex, and had narrowly escaped the rope, was chosen to go over; and on his way to Madrid this agent of disorder met Guy Fawkes, who was proceeding from Brussels on the same black errand as himself. As Kit represented Garnet and Catesby, Guy represented Owen and Stanley, in this common appeal from Rome to Spain.

They met with no response; for Philip had neither ships nor men to bury in the Irish seas; and Lerma, who was counting his doubloons and conning his reports, imagined he could buy with gold from Cecil and Northampton far more than he could gain by Garnet's craft and Catesby's zeal.

Rebuffed on every side, the fanatics were in despair. Without a friend in Rome, in London, in Madrid, what could they do?

One course at least lay open. They could kill the King. No foreign help was wanted to 'cut off' James, in what was then the commonest form

of public assassination. They could blast him with powder, as an engineer blows down a wall. Had not his father, Darnley, been killed in this simple way? The thing was not only easy to do, but safe to do. Darnley had been killed in the Kirk of Field, and no one else had suffered by the shock. That which could be done in the Canongate, could also be done in Parliament Place. The House of Lords was larger than the Kirk of Field; but what should prevent them from using a larger blast? Bothwell had employed a dozen sacks of powder; why should not Catesby employ a hundred sacks? Powder was cheap.

The idea was not new, still less could it be called heroic. Every soldier had in those days helped to drive a shaft, and thousands of men who were not soldiers had heard the crash of exploding mines. The war then raging beyond the straits was a war of engineers; and in the trenches before Ostend whole companies were occasionally blown into the air. Among the visitors at White Webbs, many had seen service in the field, so that the power of cutting off an enemy by a charge of powder was familiar to their minds.

A train had been laid against Farnese in the

streets of Antwerp; a second such train had been laid against the Provincial Council at the Hague. Not once, but many times, the great Queen's life had been threatened by a powder plot. One such attempt was made by Michael Moody; and in later times, Thomas Morgan, a pupil of Father Owen, had offered to carry out the scheme in which Moody failed.

If any one gave the main idea of the Powder scheme to Catesby, that man was Morgan. There is proof that Morgan told Hugh Owen of his plans, and that Owen explained them to his creature Fawkes.

This Thomas Morgan, otherwise known as Charles Thomas, a brother of Rowland Morgan, seminary priest, and of Harry Morgan, Customer of Cardiff, was one of those dangerous exiles on whom Cecil kept a watchful eye. Himself a spy, his steps were always dogged by spies; and many a merry fellow who roused and drank with him in the Flemish wine-shops, lived on the wages of their common shame. A tool of the Jesuits whom they hardly cared to own as friend, he was employed by them in work to which few could stoop; in following frail women, in tempting soldiers to desert, in watching base intrigues,

and following to their source the scandals of a camp. For such foul things Morgan had a natural taste. He had spent his days between the back stairs of a palace and the black hole in a jail; now playing the part of pimp, anon of lover, and then of spy. After threatening Elizabeth's life he had blackened Farnese's name; on which the great Italian soldier had flung him into prison, instead of flinging him into the Scheldt. But rogues like Morgan are not easily stamped out. He got away to Spain, where he could show his teeth. One day, we find him at Porto Santa Maria, giving secret hints to the Adelantado of Seville, on the way to surprise and capture English ships; and shortly afterwards in Madrid, moving heaven and earth to get his contemptuous enemy recalled from those Netherlands which he had saved for the Spanish crown.

The fellow had changed his field, but he had not done with plots. He was now in Paris, in the pay of Mademoiselle Catharine d' Entragues, Marquise de Verneuil, the King's mistress; deeply engaged in the criminal intrigues which led to the arrest, and nearly to the ruin, of that royal favourite.

Catesby had a lodging on the river bank at Lambeth, near Horse Ferry, as well as one in Moorcroft, under the city wall. He was living in that village of boatmen and fishwives with Jack Wright, the elder brother of Kit; a ruined North Country squire, a great fencer, a pupil of the Jesuits, and a pardoned rebel, whom he housed and fed. The fine gentleman and his needy follower walked by the river, brooding over plans for 'cutting off' King James. Before them, across the Thames, rose the majestic front of the House of Lords. Within that pile stood the throne, on which the King would have to sit when he came from Whitehall to open his Parliament, surrounded by his wife, his son, his councillors, and his peers. Would not a train of powder, laid below that throne, destroy them all?

Wanting a fellow with more brains than Jack Wright by his side, Catesby wrote to Huddington, where Tom Winter was staying with his brother, Robert, in a very low state of mind. When Tom came up to Lambeth, Catesby explained his project. 'This strake at the root,' said Winter, musing; 'but what if they should fail?' They could not fail, urged Catesby, if they got a man who knew his trade to construct

the mine. At once, he mentioned the name of Fawkes, with whom Kit Wright had journeyed into Spain.

The two fanatics deferred to Catesby's views; for Catesby was to them not only a man of daring spirit, but a fine gentleman—the Lord of Lapworth and Ashby St. Leger, while they were only Jack and Tom. But ere they took that step, from which they could never turn back, Tom urged that a last appeal should be made for help on the side of Spain; and Catesby, though he said it would come to nought, was willing to oblige his tools. He had to deal with the weak no less than with the strong. He had to ask what could be done when the blow was struck. He had to satisfy his friends before he could destroy his enemies; and Tom Winter imagined that when the old Catholic families saw how the search for help had been made on every side, and on every side in vain, many of those who would otherwise stand aloof, might be induced to join them after the King was killed.

That last appeal could be made without loss of time. A great hidalgo, Juan Fernando de Velasco, Duke de Frias and Constable of Castile, was on his way to London, armed with powers to arrange

the terms of peace. Velasco was then at Bergues, in Flanders, a small inland fortress, near Dunkerque, where he was waiting for his final orders, ere he crossed the Straits into Kent. To him they could send Tom Winter on a last appeal, and if, as they supposed, the Constable was bent on serving his earthly rather than his heavenly master, they could then go forward in their work with the certainty of finding troops who would join them with a conscience free from doubt. But in a mission of so much moment they must have Jesuit counsel and Jesuit help. They rode to White Webbs, and Garnet, advised that Tresham and Monteagle should be asked to join in the message to Velasco, in order to give it importance in the Constable's eyes. Monteagle, Tresham and Catesby held a meeting, at which Winter's instructions were drawn up and signed; but these three gentlemen, painfully aware how little they could pretend to represent the English Catholics, and certain that the Constable would ask their messenger why he had brought no letters from Northumberland, Montagu, and Mordaunt, told Winter to explain that the three gentlemen were of a quality most fit for such an enterprise, since they were not so deeply suspected and closely

watched as the great Catholic peers. But the mission was, on Catesby's part, a blind. The true business on which Tom went over sea was to confer with Owen and engage the services of Fawkes.

Winter found Father Owen at Dunkerque, in waiting on Velasco, who was still at Bergues. Owen walked with Tom to Bergues, where they saw Velasco, and learned from the Constable that he had not only received strict commands from his royal master to do good offices to the Catholics, but was bound in his own conscience to do them. As the Jesuit and the conspirator walked back through the marshes to Dunkerque, they canvassed Velasco's words. 'Will they help us?' asked Winter. 'Not a jot,' said Owen, 'they seek their own ends, and care nothing about us.' Then Winter told the Father what the three men had contrived, and asked him whether Fawkes could be trusted in such a work. Owen said yes; Fawkes was in Brussels, but Owen undertook that he should start for London in a trice.

Then Winter rode to the camp before Ostend, to see Sir William Stanley, and inquire of Fawkes's 'sufficiency in the wars.' Stanley spoke well of him; and, while they were talking together, Fawkes came in to salute his captain.

'This is the gentleman,' said Sir William, and the two men who were to labour in the mine, shook hands. 'Some good friends of yours,' quoth Tom, 'desire your company in England, and if you please to come to me, we will confer on that subject.' Two days later, Fawkes rode over to Dunkerque, where they talked the matter over with Father Owen and other Jesuits; Winter explaining to them Catesby's plan for laying a train of powder below the throne. At last, near Easter Term, the talk was over and the bargain made. Fawkes took the name of John Johnson, in which his pass was drawn, and the two conspirators crossed from Gravelines to Greenwich, where they took a pair of oars and pulled for Lambeth, and landed at Horse Ferry, near Catesby's door.

CHAPTER XIII.

VINEGAR HOUSE.

In Parliament Place, the narrow lane going up from the river stair, then called the Queen's Bridge, stood Vinegar House, a small stone tenement leaning against the Prince's Chamber, which formed a part of the old palace, known as the House of Lords. From the cellars of this small tenement a shaft might be driven through the foundations into the dark passages and vaults below the throne. Catesby supposed that these dark passages and vaults were empty; ready, in fact, to become the chambers of his mine. Vinegar House was, therefore, his Kirk of Field.

But how was he to gain possession? This tenement, a part of the crown estate, was held on simple lease by John Whynyard, Yeoman of the Wardrobe, whose official residence it was. What chance had a pardoned rebel, a notorious plotter,

of getting such a house into his power? Catesby could not go and make inquiries; for his face being known to Cecil's spies, he could hardly have landed at the Queen's Bridge or strolled up Parliament Place without being watched. Tom Bates, his serving-man, was therefore sent across to see who lived in the house, and learn if it could be hired. Bates brought word to Lambeth that the Yeoman's rooms were under-let to their old Warwickshire neighbour, Henry Ferrers, of Baddesley Clinton, the famous antiquary. Lapworth, in which Catesby was born, is but a mile from the moated old manor in which Ferrers lived. Yet Catesby dared not move one step; for the famous antiquary, though a Catholic, was a Catholic of the English school. In hiring such a place, he must have the use of some free and unstained name. What name? Jack Wright, his chum, was compromised like himself; but Jack had a brother-in-law, in Thomas Percy, who seemed the very man to get Vinegar House from the collector of county pedigrees. Percy was a fine gentleman, of kin to the great Northumbrian Earl. A courtier by birth, a Gentleman Pensioner, in attendance on the King, he would excite no question by pretending that

he needed a lodging near the court. This Percy had never been concerned in plots, and his reputation was that of a merry fellow, who spent his money in the Cheapside taverns and his health on the Bankside dames. But Wright could answer for a change having come over his sister's spouse. A wasted man of forty-five years, with lanky face and feverish eyes, Percy had been found by Jesuits in the stews, and brought by them to a sense of his abominable life. Once he had cared for nothing but a bottle and a bright eye, now his comfort lay in a daily conflict with the flesh. He had a grievance, too, which might help to serve them; for, in his opinion, the King had used him as a tool, and mocked him as a dupe.

Catesby, who knew that Percy was sore in spirit, invited him to the house at Lambeth, in which Wright was living, and to which Winter came. 'Well, gentlemen,' said the new-comer, 'shall we always talk and never do?' That was the key to strike; and Catesby, taking him aside, explained to him the project — showing him the House of Lords, which they could see from his window — telling him how they would drive the shaft from the cellars of Vinegar House — and

giving him the names of those who were already privy to his hope. Percy entered into the design at once, for his hatred of the prince who had deceived and mocked him was at fever point.

A lodging was taken for Guy Fawkes, (Mr. 'Johnson,') in the house of Widow Herbert, in Butcher Row, an alley behind St. Clement Danes. To this house in Butcher Row came Father Gerard from White Webbs, bringing with him the stuff to decorate an altar, bread and wine for the sacrament, and all the things required by a priest when celebrating mass. An upper room of Widow Herbert's house was turned into a chapel; and when the priest was ready for his part, Catesby, Percy, Tom Winter, Jack Wright, and Fawkes, assembled in the house —a quaint old Tudor pile at the corner of Clement's Lane—first in the lower room, where they swore each other upon the Primer; and then in the upper room, where they heard Father Gerard say mass, and took from his hands the sacrament on that oath. Each of the five conspirators was sworn upon his knees, with his hand on the Primer, that he would keep the secret, that he would be true to his fellows, that he would be constant in the plot.

The question now arose more sharply—How were they to get possession of Vinegar House? The good old antiquary, it seemed, was seldom in town, and might be persuaded to sell his lease; but on application being made to Ferrers, they found that he had no power to sell, unless with Whynyard's knowledge and consent; a thing which it might be hard for them to get. Percy made the task his own. Whynyard was away from town, attending on the court, and when Percy spoke to his wife Susan, the thrifty woman made some ado about it, as she knew that to let an official residence was wrong; but on Percy hinting that he would buy her 'good will,' her scruples melted into air. Besides the money, she felt that a Gentleman Pensioner might be a good friend to a Yeoman of the Wardrobe. Yet Mrs. Whynyard was prudent enough to ask for references, and she only parted with the key of her house on the pledge of Sir Dudley Carleton and other of the Earl's gentlemen. Percy was to pay twenty pounds to Ferrers for his lease, and four pounds a quarter for his rent.

A small tenement adjoined Vinegar House, in which Gideon Gibbins, the porter, lived. This tenement Percy was to have at any time he

pleased; and in the meanwhile, Mrs. Gibbins, the porter's wife, was hired to keep his house.

Vinegar House, like many official lodgings at the court, had only one bed-room; so that when Percy brought Guy Fawkes, in the character of his servant 'Johnson,' to the house, he had to lie elsewhere himself. Percy made a friend of Mrs. Gibbins, as well as of Mrs. Whynyard, so that little was said about his going and coming to Parliament Place. He was said to be at Sion, at Alnwick, at Wressil, at Petworth, busy about the Earl's affairs.

The conspirators had got their cellar, and only a dozen feet of masonry divided them from the passages and vaults below the throne. But the house was too small for a magazine, and stood in a lane too much exposed. They would require a second house, in which to hoard the planks, the powder, and the mining tools; a house near the river, and not too far from Parliament Place. On looking round, they saw that Catesby's lodging on the Lambeth side would do; but his housekeeper could not be trusted; and before they could begin to pile up planks and powder they must find some 'honest fellow' to keep their store. This 'honest fellow' they found in Robert Kay, a reprobate son

of Edward Kay, Vicar of Staveley. Kay was starving in the streets, having left the service of Lord Mordaunt, in whose family his wife was an upper nurse. Kay took the oaths, and went to the river bank, on which Catesby removed to his place in Moorcroft, under the city wall.

In this lonely house by the river side, Winter and Kay began to collect the tools, to frame the planks, and to prepare the powder; which they afterwards boated over in the dead of night, and put on shore in a covered nook of the wharf, near the Queen's Bridge. Except from the river, it was impossible to see their boat, and only then by persons who were close in shore. One autumn night, a servant from the Wardrobe office, coming late to Westminster, and going under the wall of Sir Thomas Parry's garden, saw a strange boat by the wharf, with men going to and fro, through the back door of Percy's house; but one of these men being Gibbins, the porter, he thought no more about it. Gibbins had been taken into Percy's pay.

Some months elapsed before Fawkes was ready to begin the mine; for Vinegar House being public property, held by the Yeoman on simple lease, he was subject to interference of

many kinds. Once, indeed, Fawkes was thrown into despair by news that the house was wanted by the crown.

Parliament was sitting, busy with fifty committees and conferences, when the King brought forward his great and premature scheme for a legislative union of the two kingdoms. Warm debates took place on this proposal, in which Bacon played the leading part. The judges objected to the change of title from England to Great Britain; sixteen commissioners, of whom the first was Bacon, were appointed to consider the project in all its bearings on policy and law; and as room for Bacon and his fellows could not be found in the palace proper, the adjoining tenement was ordered to be cleared. In fact, those famous conferences between Bacon and Hamilton, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, which are celebrated in the 'Essays,' as an example of grave and orderly proceedings in affairs of state, were held in Vinegar House.

Surprised by this bad news, Fawkes sent for Tom Winter, who quickly came in to see what could be done.

The powder, planks and mining tools, could hardly be taken away unseen. The lesser danger was to leave them; yet the plotters must

have left them in despair; since the chance of a discovery hung on such accidents as that of a servant going down into the vaults. Bacon and Hamilton, with some of the best gentlemen of England and Scotland, met for many weeks to debate the terms of union in a powder-magazine!

At length their work was done, and the Commissioners went away, not dreaming of the perils from which they had so narrowly escaped. Then Fawkes returned to arm and strengthen his house, so that he and his fellows might be able, in case of sudden attack, to resist some hours. The four gentlemen who were to be his companions in the mine had all seen service, more or less, and two of them had been regularly trained to arms. Jack Wright was said to be the finest swordsman of his day.

When all was ready for them, the five confederates came to Parliament Place, late in the night, and one by one, unseen, each with his pockets full of baked pies and boiled eggs. They went down into the cellar, carrying with them iron bars, and powder, and holy water, to find that the task on which they were entering was beyond their strength. When wasted and worn by toil, they fetched in Kay from Lambeth, leaving the

house locked up, and swore Kit Wright of the brotherhood; but, when all was done, the seven were found to be as weak in presence of the stone foundations as the five. Fawkes, who kept the watch while his fellows toiled in the mine, gave notice of the coming of any one down the lane. Much time was spent in grubbing at the stone before an incident let in a flood of light upon their minds. What did they expect to find on the other side of that solid wall? Large vaults and passages lying below the Prince's Chamber and the House of Lords; but in what state could they expect to find these passages and vaults? What if they were tenanted? A noise was heard in the earth—the miners sprinkled holy water on the ground; but still the noise went on. What could it be? They sent for Fawkes, who listened on the ground with a miner's ear. As he could make no guess as to whence it came, he covered his dress with a porter's frock, and went up stairs into the street. In a closed court, behind the Prince's Chamber, he found a low door open, with men going up and down the steps, which led, as he could plainly see, into the passages and vaults beneath the House of Lords. On prying further, he learned that a sale

of coals was going on; for Andrew Bright, distiller of sweet herbs to the Court, the tenant of these vaults, was selling off his stock and giving up his lease to one Skinner of King Street, for the purposes of his trade.

When Fawkes returned with this news, the confederates saw that their shaft was a mistake; for what would they gain by driving through a dozen feet of granite to arrive in a magazine of goods? They must get those vaults. They must get them at any cost. But how? Skinner was now their man; but how could they induce him to forego his lease? What lie could they invent, that would not seem a lie? They hit on a device, which Percy was to put in train. Going to Mrs. Whynyard, Percy told that dame that his wife, who was then in the country, wished to come up and see the town. She was to live with him at Vinegar House, to be near the court; but before she came, he wished to lay in stores of coals and billets, and would therefore like to hire the adjoining vaults. If she could help him with Skinner, he would give her twenty shillings for her trouble, and pay her one year's rent in advance. Skinner's rent was four pounds a-year, and Percy offered to pay her five pounds down. This money tempted

her, though she felt some qualms; and going up to King Street, she arranged the business with Mrs. Skinner, who undertook, for a present of forty shillings, to persuade her husband to oblige a gentleman, who was not only a kinsman of Northumberland, but a servant of the King.

The place now bought for a year for seven pounds, was a long series of passages and vaults, of Early English work, with walls of enormous strength, and a roof supported by beams and shafts, like those in the White tower. Being low and dark, the stores brought into them from the street could be easily hidden out of sight. The task of the plotters was therefore done so soon as the boats had ferried the sacks of powder across from the Lambeth side, and Fawkes had covered them over with sticks and stones, with broken glass and a litter of coals.

Vinegar House being now ready for Mrs. Percy, the gentleman left for the country; telling Mrs. Whynyard that he was going away to fetch his lady up to town.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSPIRACY AT LARGE.

THE comrades parted company in Parliament Place; each of the seven going off to his several home, conspirators at large.

Giving up his keys to Mrs. Gibbins, Fawkes went back to Flanders, where he had work to do, which could only be done through Father Owen and Sir William Stanley, now recognised in Butcher Row and Enfield Chase as the Foreign Minister and General of the plot. On looking to the moment when the blow was struck, the fanatics saw that two things would be wanted in that hour of need:—an armed force within easy reach of the Tower, and a favourable disposition on the part of foreign courts. The two great men in Flanders could promote these ends. Owen was the most active and experienced agent in court and camp. The exiles would obey his slightest hint, and the statesmen of Europe would listen to him more readily than

to any other English priest. Stanley could arm and drill the volunteers whom Owen drew over to their cause, so as to hold a force in hand to cross when the mine was fired and the King was slain. Some doubts were felt as to whether it would be safe to trust these exiles with the secret; but Catesby overcame all doubts by saying it must be done; and Fawkes arrived in Brussels empowered to tell the Jesuit and the General all.

Stanley was then in Spain; but Father Owen received his news with rapture. Yes; they could count on him. Of Stanley, he was not so sure. That exile was in Madrid, persuading Lerma to make his peace with James; and he would hardly tie his hands by entering into yet another plot. But Owen, believing he would fail with Lerma, expected him back in Brussels with the bitter heart of a newly disappointed man. The Father undertook to deal with him at the proper time; and he pledged his word to Fawkes that when the deed was done, Sir William and his regiment should cross the Straits, and march upon the Tower.

The Jesuit also took upon himself to prepare the way for them in Rome; where, at the moment, things were looking black for the cause in which

they had staked their lives. The Pope seemed more and more inclined towards peace; the English college was in disgrace; and Aquaviva, at the personal request of Clement, had ordered Persons to retire from Rome. The Jesuit was in Naples, fretting his life out in that Spanish city, while the Pope was receiving messages from James with every mark of personal good will. To have an agent in Rome was now essential; and, with the advice of Catesby, Sir Edmund Baynham was sent by Father Owen into Italy, instructed to prepare the Roman court for what was coming, and to justify it when the crash should come.

Catesby rode down to Lapworth with Jack Wright, whom he left in the old manor, while he rode on to Oxford with Tom Winter, whither he had called two country squires to meet him; Robert Winter, of Huddington, Tom's elder brother, a slow and rather stupid fellow, and John Grant of Norbrook, one of those reckless devils who had been out with Essex in the Strand. These squires he meant to draw into his plot.

As the fine gentlemen of the circle, Catesby and Percy had a place and power apart from the other five. Fawkes had been a servant to Lord Montagu. Winter was a servant to Lord Mont-

eagle. Kay had been a servant to Lord Mordaunt. Jack Wright, the fencer, was a ruined man, whom Catesby had to feed and lodge. Kit Wright was poorer than his brother Jack. The money which had gone in hire of houses, and in pay of men, was either Catesby's money or Percy's money. Large sums were needed to conduct their enterprise; and no one could suggest a way of raising funds except by drawing on the purses of richer men. But where could they find such comrades? Men with money are shy of plots. This Catesby and Percy told their fellows; saying, truly enough, that many a country squire might lend them his money, and even promise them his sword, who would not care to put himself wholly into their power by giving in his name. On this ground, Catesby asked from the five a singular and dangerous power; no less than that he and Percy should be free to communicate their secret to any one they pleased, if it were done in the presence, and with the consent, of any sworn brother. That power was given up to them; for how could Jack and Tom, Kit and Guy, resist such men?

When Robert Winter heard from Catesby's lips of the design in which his brother Tom had risked his neck, he turned away sullenly,

saying the project was too dangerous, and would be sure to fail unless the Catholic powers abroad and the Catholic lords at home should give their aid. John Grant raised no objection to the mine; and after much debate, the two country squires were sworn into the plot.

Tom Bates, the serving-man, was now brought in, from fear of his idle tongue. Being much about Vinegar House, in waiting on his master, Bates had come to know of the mine and vault; and Catesby knew of no way to shut his mouth except by swearing him on the Primer, and making him a party in their perils. Bates had no brains for such a work, and in his very next confession he blabbed out the secret to his priest, whose game it was to have known nothing about the design on foot. The priest was Father Greenway, one of Garnet's circle at White Webbs; and the holy man could not pacify Bates without telling him, in express terms, that the cause was good, that he must keep the secret, and that then only he should have absolution for his sins.

From Oxford, Catesby rode down to Bath, where Percy was drinking the waters for his health. Their work was going on well, yet many things had to be arranged before the blow was struck.

The King and Prince being slain, they must get Charles, and his sister Elizabeth, into their keeping, to use as policy should prompt them. Charles, it was hoped, would be in London; Elizabeth was at Combe Abbey, two miles from Coventry. Percy undertook to seize the Prince, Catesby the Princess. As an officer of the household, Percy could go into the Prince's chamber, and he arranged to be there when the blow was struck. He was to station a dozen men at the palace doors; to post three mounted gentlemen at the court gate; and then go in—with a trusty friend—and chat with the Prince until the crash was heard in Parliament Place, when he was to hurry Charles away. Catesby, on his side, was to call his Catholic friends together at Dunchurch, near his seat of Ashby St. Leger, on pretence of a great hunting-party, which he hoped Lord Harrington and the knights in attendance on Elizabeth at Combe would be induced to join; so that the confederates, moving secretly and rapidly from many points on the Abbey, might take the Princess by surprise, and all but alone.

But more was needed than a plan of operations. They needed money, and they needed men; for both of which they saw that they would have to

go beyond the narrow circle of converts to their faith. Catesby urged on Percy that many gentlemen would trust him and help him, who would not put their lives into the hands of all by taking a formal oath; and Percy, knowing from his own experience that this was true, raised no objection to Catesby's proposal that each of them should have the power, without consulting their comrades, to act—from time to time—in the common cause as their judgment should seem well. Percy consented to this new and still more dangerous stretch of their separate power.

As the time to act drew near, the man who had most to gain and most to lose began to play with his comrades' lives, but only as he fancied for their good, because he knew better than his fellows how far he could go; putting this man on his guard by a hint—taking that man into his confidence by an oath; telling half the truth to one—the whole truth to another, according to the service which he hoped to secure from each. Armed with his new powers, he rode to Huddington, Robert Winter's seat, from which he wrote to Stephen Littleton of Holbeche and Humphrey his younger brother; members of an old Catholic family, to whom he dared

to reveal his plot in full. He told those squires that he was raising a Catholic regiment for the Cardinal Archduke's service, to consist of three hundred horse; and he offered to Stephen the rank of captain in this troop. Stephen, pleased with his prospects, undertook to raise money and men, and to hold his company in readiness to march.

Ambrose Rokewood was a man of similar stamp. A great breeder and lover of horses, of which he kept a stud at Coldham Hall more fit for a prince than for a country gentleman, it was of vast importance for Catesby to bring Rokewood in. But the task was not easy; for the Suffolk squire, though educated in a Jesuits' college, and equally attached to Garnet and to Catesby, with whom he had acted in the dangerous affair of Wright's mission to Madrid, was of an ancient Catholic race, not much inclined to adopt such desperate remedies for his wrongs as public murder in the name of God. His love for Catesby was like that of a woman; yet his soul recoiled from the thought of shedding blood, and he told his tempter he could not in conscience join him. Long and subtle were the arguments employed to draw him in. The case, his friend assured him, had been settled by the Catholic divines;

a case of conscience having been drawn up, in which the facts set forth would cover their own design. But many persons, urged the squire, would perish in the explosion who had done no harm. They could not help that, Catesby said; and their divines had laid down the rule, that if an action, otherwise right, could not be done without killing some innocents, it might still be done. Rokewood was not convinced, and even his love for Catesby might have failed to draw him in, had not the persecuting spirit of the times inflicted on his proud nature a bitter sense of personal wrong, in his indictment before the Middlesex magistrates as a notorious Papist and recusant. Full of fear and sore with insult, Rokewood threw himself into his tempter's arms.

The snare was thrown at Sir Everard Digby. Digby, educated in the national church, had been caught by the Jesuits in his early manhood; and his house of Goathurst, in Bucks, had long been used as a hiding-place for priests. When Catesby spoke to him, Digby started at the news; he could not seize the principle of such a crime; and when Catesby told him it was sanctioned by the Jesuits, he expressed some doubts of such a fact. But on consulting Father

Fisher, his confessor, he learned that what Catesby said was true; on which he promised his support, and a contribution of fifteen hundred pounds.

This doubt was also found in his Cousin Frank. Frank Tresham had of late kept clear of plots, believing, like Monteagle, that his wiser course would be to make friends at court, and take his chance with Northampton and the Catholic peers, instead of with Garnet and the converts of White Webbs. He was not mad; he shrank with visible dread from the crime of murder; and before the secret oath had passed his lips, his friend was troubled with a ghastly fear. Would Frank betray him, Catesby asked himself? More than once he wished he had not spoken. Frank was hot and cold by turns; suggesting doubts as to what would be said in Rome; proposing questions as to how their brethren could be saved; and generally objecting to the mine and the march on Combe Abbey as sure to fail. Yet, as Frank promised help in money and in men—in money, two thousand pounds—his jealous cousin could only take his gold and stick a poniard in his belt; so that on the slightest sign of treason he could plunge the steel into his heart.

Mrs. Vaux of Harrowden, sister-in-law of Ann and Helen, was used by the conspirators without being sworn. This lady, by birth a Roper, was of ancient Catholic stock, and not to be trusted with a knowledge of Catesby's plans. But she was asked to invite such persons to her house as Henry Hurlstone and other squires whom Garnet and Catesby desired to meet; gentlemen who might be persuaded to join the hunt at Dunchurch, in the hope that when their blood was stirred by news from Parliament Place, they could be drawn into marching on Combe Abbey with the rest.

CHAPTER XV.

THE JESUITS MOVE.

THE time was now come for the Jesuits to move, so as to rouse their pupils without committing themselves too openly to the plot.

Good news came in from Rome, to which Persons had returned from Naples, at the call of a new Pope. Clement was dead: and Leo, his successor, was also dead. In thirty days, three Popes had reigned in Rome; the last of whom, Paul the Fifth, a man of chilled and fervent passions, gave his ear to the English Jesuits, as councillors who *must* understand their country better than Italian cardinals and Spanish monks. Paul heard nothing from Persons about Catesby's crime; but he listened with zeal to his statements on English affairs; and promised his wily visitor that he would think over his request for help in the task of converting souls to God. Persons was about to send a priest to London, one Father

Robarts, to stand by the side of Fawkes. It was of high importance that Robarts should go to England fresh from the Pontiff's presence, and with the Pontiff's blessing on his head. Persons obtained for him a special audience and benediction from Paul, and then despatched him to London, with orders to report himself to Garnet and Catesby, and to take up his post where those councillors should suggest.

Good news came in from the Flemish camp, to which Stanley had returned, as Father Owen expected, in bitter mood. He was easily induced to join a plot in which he was to play the most brilliant part. His comrades in London heard with delight that he was raising a brigade of Swiss, Walloons, and Irish, which he would lead in person across the Straits so soon as he received a summons from White Webbs.

Coming back from Flanders, Fawkes took up his abode in Vinegar House, to which Mrs. Percy was said to be coming from her country seat. He paid the quarter's rent then due, and Mrs. Whynyard observed that his purse was full of gold. But he often went from home, and stayed away all night. In fact, he kept his old lodging in Butcher Row, at widow Herbert's house, as a

more convenient place of call for his friends than either the tavern in Carter Lane or the house in Parliament Place. Mrs. Herbert hardly liked her lodger, whose coming and going she could not quite make out; but he paid his rent to the hour, and was much away from Butcher Row—points in his favour in the landlady's eyes. Often he was at Moorcroft and White Webbs in secret conference with Catesby and Tom. His masters deemed it prudent for him to be rarely seen in Parliament Place.

Early in the year, Father Garnet, Father Oldcorne, and the two ladies, left White Webbs for the midland shires, where the chief conspirators were gathering into knots and groups. 'Mrs. Perkins' left her servant James in the house.

They began their travels in the double character of laymen and of priests. On the road and at inn-yards, Garnet was 'Mr. Mese,' Oldcorne was 'Mr. Perkins,' while, in the houses of their penitents, they were known as Father Walley and Father Tesmond. The ladies had a similar choice of names. Ann was 'Mrs. Perkins' on the road, Mrs. Vaux in the house; Helen was 'Mrs. Jennings' on the road, Mrs. Brooksby in the house. Brooksby was sometimes with them,

oftener he was far away. They seldom slept on the road, and never when it could be helped, but passed from one Catholic mansion to another, under secret arrangements, which never failed.

In June, they came to White Webbs for a week, and left it for a second round of visits, on the close of which they came home again for three or four days.

The time was now come for every one to assume his post. The Fathers held a council, and, when it broke up, the Prefect and his two most trusty brethren separated, never to meet again. Garnet was to go into the midland shires. Oldcorne, under his lay name of 'Perkins,' was to remain in London. Greenway was to cross over to Flanders. By this arrangement, each knot of the conspirators would have a Jesuit in their midst.

The two ladies were to ride down with Garnet, so as to be at head-quarters; but ere they rode away, 'Mrs. Perkins' called her servant James, and gave him charge of her house, with orders how to act. The house was to be kept open and the stable ready, to receive her friends. Some gentlemen would call, and beds must be kept for them. He must see to their comforts, and look well after their horses. Then the company rode

away for the last time; going straight to Goathurst, Digby's seat in Bucks, where they found the knight and his lady, Father Fisher their confessor, Ambrose Rokewood and his wife, with a company of some thirty squires and dames.

The Prefect had arranged a picturesque and striking scene, as prelude to the tragedy in Parliament Place; a pilgrimage to some holy well, in which the men and women could equally have their part. He chose St. Winifred's Well, in Flintshire, as the term of their journey; and after a mass of special meaning had been said at Goathurst, the whole company mounted and rode away, with Father Garnet and Father Fisher in their midst. The first resting-place of the cavalcade was Norbrook, where Grant received them, and Garnet said mass; the second, Huddington, where Winter received them, and Garnet again said mass. From Huddington they rode to Holt, where the ladies left their horses, and putting off shoes and socks, walked bare-footed to the Well. A special mass was said once more; after which the party spent a night in the open air, with the Flintshire saint. When daylight came, the penitents walked back to Holt, put on their shoes and socks, and returned the way they had come,

through Huddington and Norbrook, to Digby's house, where the company dispersed to their several homes; all the guests going away except Garnet, Mrs. Brooksby, and Ann Vaux.

Lapworth, Catesby's house, near Warwick, was the natural centre of the plot; but Lapworth was too small a place; and on the advice of Catesby, Sir Everard Digby moved to Coughton, Thomas Throckmorton's seat, near Alcaster, a central station, and convenient house. Rokewood, also, on the same suggestion, hired Clopton, near Stratford-on-Avon, from Lord Carew. Jack Wright was at Lapworth; Thomas Morgan, the assassin, was at Norbrook with a female companion of dubious fame. Stephen Littleton was at Hagley, waiting for his summons to mount and march.

When all was ready for the blow in London, Father Garnet and the two ladies rode over from Goathurst to Coughton, where the Prefect lodged in the midst of his unruly scholars until he heard from Digby that the plot had failed.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN LONDON.

In spite of his haughty bearing, Catesby was much perplexed in mind.

He feared that his cousin Frank was false, that his enterprise would fail, that his neck was forfeit to the law. The last ten days of his London life were spent, with intervals, at the lonely house in Enfield Chase.

Coming up from the shires, in company with Guy Fawkes, he stopped on Friday, October 25, at White Webbs, to which house he called Tom Winter from Montagu Close. Reports had reached him that Prince Henry would not attend his father in the House of Lords; in which case all their pains in seizing the Princess Elizabeth at Combe Abbey, and the Duke of York in Whitehall Palace, would be thrown away. The father killed, his son would be king. Could Winter say whether these reports were true? Yes, Winter had heard

this news. 'Then we must have our horses beyond the water,' cried his chief; 'and a company to surprise the Prince, and leave the Duke alone.' They sent word to Percy, then in the north, to ride up to London with his utmost speed.

What lay with Catesby had been done. The mine was laid; the torch was ready; and the man was sure. A boat was lying near the Queen's Bridge, by which it was hoped that Fawkes could push into the stream, so as to avoid the shock and ruin of the mine. Lower down the river lay a vessel, ready to set sail, by which he could escape to a foreign port, with news of the King's death, and a message for Stanley to cross, with his Swiss and Irish companies, into the Thames. Parliament was to meet on Tuesday, November 5; a day, as Catesby thought, to be ever glorious in the calendar of his church. Excepting Percy, the chiefs were now in London, waiting for that Tuesday to arrive. Father Robarts had been stationed in Vinegar House, under the care of Mrs. Gibbins. Catesby was at White Webbs. Fawkes returned to Butcher Row for two or three nights. Tom Winter was in Montagu Close. Jack Wright was at the Horse Ferry, Lambeth. Cousin Frank

was in Clerkenwell. Rokewood, Kay, and Kit Wright were lodging at St. Giles' Fields, in the house of Mrs. More. When Percy came to town, he was to stay with his friends, Rokewood and Kay, in their lodgings at Mrs. More's. Fawkes, who was now become the nearest of Catesby's comrades, spent most of his time secreted at Enfield Chase. All things were prepared; and all things, down to the inscriptions on their swords, in what the conspirators conceived to be a religious spirit. Rokewood had employed a cutler named Cradock to make three sword-hilts, on each of which he was to engrave the Passion of Christ. These swords were for himself, Kit Wright, and Kay. Their chief, though he ordered no such hilt for himself, was so much interested in the work that he called very often at Cradock's shop to see what progress he had made.

A fancy sword was not the thing of which Catesby stood in most pressing need. He wanted money, and he wanted men. The absence of Prince Henry crossed his plans; and the means of seizing that Prince at the moment of explosion were now beyond their reach. His scheme was falling into chaos. Cousin Frank, too, was suspected by him more and more. Frank had

not yet supplied the whole of his two thousand pounds, and his general conduct had been so strange of late that Catesby, though he loved him dearly, had more than once thought of soothing his jealous rage by plunging the dagger into his heart.

In truth, the Frank Tresham who had played with him as a boy, and who had sworn the oath to keep his secret, was not the Mr. Tresham with whom he had now to deal. A serious change had come. His sworn companion was not the rich Northampton squire, for his father, Sir Thomas, had been then alive; but while the penitents were walking bare-legged to St. Winifred's Well, Sir Thomas had passed away, and Frank had been left the master of Rushton Hall, with one of the best estates in the midland shires. Then only he saw the error of his way, for what he had done in taking the oath of secresy put this large estate in peril, and Mr. Tresham was suspected by his desperate kinsman of a design to undo what Cousin Frank had done.

This task of undoing what he had done was not easy for Mr. Tresham; since the payments which he had made under his first rash promise had put him equally into Catesby's power and

into Cecil's power. As a conspirator—guilty of compassing the King's death—his life and fortune were at stake, and one word from his disdainful cousin would send him, a ruined traitor, to the Tower. How far Cecil and Northampton were acquainted with the plot he shrewdly guessed; for any man who watched the Secretary's action, with the clue in his hand, could hardly help seeing that the government knew as much as they cared to learn.

A man must have been ignorant of Cecil and Northampton in no common measure who could have dreamed that a secret which was known to a hundred persons in Douai, Madrid, and Rome —that a design which had been nursed at White Webbs and carried out in Parliament Place—could have escaped the greatest masters of intrigue alive. Many of the court papers have been burnt, yet enough remains to show that the Council were informed of the plot in almost every stage. Tilletson had told them of the design to cut off the King and his progeny. Southwick, one of their priestly spies in France, had sent them news of everything done by the Jesuits, and the name of every Jesuit who crossed the sea into Kent. Wilson wrote to them from Valla-

dolid, that the Jesuits were to try once more what they had tried in the Queen's time, and that the King and Prince were to be killed. The matter was so far known as to be made a subject of negotiation with the Papal Nuncio in Paris, who proposed to guarantee the King's personal safety on condition of his suspending the penal laws and granting freedom of the mass. A sorcerer named Wright, a spy named Williams, an informer named Coe, sent warnings to Cecil, whose agents were in Enfield Chase, in Warwick, in Stratford, in Dunchurch,—following the Jesuits from mass to funeral, from pilgrimage to hunt—counting their numbers, marking their proselytes—mapping out their haunts.

It was no part of Cecil's policy to step in one hour before the dramatic time. He knew the value of a plot too well to sacrifice the chances which Garnet and Catesby were throwing into his path. A sudden surprise, a chase of malefactors, an arrest of Catholic peers, with a state trial, and an execution of Jesuits, would make his peace with a patriotic House of Commons, and secure to him the confidence and gratitude of James. The King was vain enough to think that he was personally a favourite of Heaven, and he wished the world to

see that he was really protected from above. He wanted a day to be set apart in the calendar to his glory; and he had tried to get his Council to adopt the fifth of August, the date of the Gowrie Plot, as his sacred day. The thing could not be done; for the Council knew that the King's escape from Ruthven had produced only a slight—and not in any sense a dramatic—shock of the public mind. The Scots themselves made a comedy of the day in Perth; and even those among his courtiers who thought he had been in danger, smiled at the affair as a personal feud, in a provincial town. But a conspiracy in London, managed by the Jesuits; and threatening a hundred lives, would serve his weakness well, if it could be only watched and turned so as to keep the actual peril far from his throat and crown. If all went well, the King might write his name in the calendar on a day to be called his own.

But Cecil and Northampton had other purposes in view. They had to convince the Duke de Lerma that they and their party in the Council were the only agents at the English court whom it would be worth his while to employ in carrying out the policy of Spain. Philip, a fanatic in creed, was still inclined to

trust the Jesuits; and it was necessary that these Jesuits should be swept away.

Measures of precaution had been taken long ago, and nothing less than the blindness which afflicts all criminals could have hidden from Catesby and Percy the movements made to defeat their game. During the summer and autumn months sharp eyes would have noticed an unusual stir among the train-bands. The musters had been called, the companies strengthened, and the arms inspected, in every shire. The Lord Lieutenants of counties had been asked to see after this great work in person; while in the shires which had no such officers, the most able member of the Privy Council had been charged with the task. If Spinola had been menacing Kent, the preparations could hardly have been more complete. Much and wise attention had been given to the bands in Warwickshire; Lord Compton, the King's Lieutenant, receiving sharp commands from Whitehall to hold reviews of men and arms, and to see for himself that both were in readiness to take the field. Edmund Nicholson, the famous armourer, was sent from London with a supply of guns and pikes for these Warwickshire bands, some of whom were then being drilled in the fields

near Norbrook. Father Southwick was sent for out of France, to help in hunting down the Jesuits; and Cecil, remembering the Essex rising and the Blackfriars play, shut up the theatres and confined the comedians to their homes.

On the very day of Catesby's arrival at White Webbs, Father Southwick was in consultation with Cecil's secretary, Levinus Munck.

The incidents through which the plot was brought to light, bear traces throughout of Cecil's art.

On Saturday afternoon, October 26th, Monteagle, who lived in Montagu Close, near the Globe Theatre, sent a messenger to his place in Hoxton, (probably Brooke House,) with orders to prepare his supper, as he meant to come out with a friend that night. The friend who rode out with him to Hoxton was Thomas Ward, a gentleman of his household, who was also a friend of Winter, and an unsworn member of the plot. As the peer and his man were sitting down to sup, a page came into the room with a letter in his hand, which had been given to him, he said, by a strange man in the lane, who bade him give it to his lord and to no one else. Monteagle broke the seal, and tossed the paper to Ward, who read it out aloud. The

words were vague enough, but they warned Monteagle, as he tendered his life, to go into the country instead of going to the Parliament house, as God and man had concurred to punish the wickedness of the times by a 'terrible blow.' Pages, servants, all his household, heard these menacing words, which Monteagle's conduct made more menacing still. He rose from table, called for his horse and rode away to town.

About ten o'clock that Saturday night, he dashed into Whitehall Yard, and ran up stairs into Cecil's private room, where he found a curious group for him to meet by chance on such a night; four Catholic Earls, whom James had now taken into his Council; Nottingham, Northampton, Suffolk, and Worcester; all of whom had come into Cecil's room to sup. Ten-o'clock suppers were rather late; but the five lords were in no hurry; and the letter which had been left at Monteagle's door in Hoxton, by the unknown man, was read aloud to them ere they sat down to eat. At table they agreed to keep their secret; as the King, who was hunting deer at Royston, was daily expected back in town.

On Sunday morning, the game was wholly in Cecil's hands, but the player was too crafty to

show his cards. One of Catesby's crazes was that Cecil was a fool; and Cecil, taking care that his victims should not be alarmed one hour too soon, so veiled his action that Catesby could neither carry out his plan nor save himself by flight. Levinus Munck, his private secretary, sent for Father Southwick, who was to take horse and ride down into the country, where he was to say little and to see much; running the Jesuit agents to their holes, and marking the cover, so that Munck could issue the warrants and throw them into jail, whenever his master pleased. Northampton sent for Sir Thomas Knyvet, a connexion of Lady Suffolk, and a man whom he could trust. Knyvet, Warder of the Mint, and a Justice of the Peace for Westminster, was to prepare for a sudden and secret service to the Crown, for which in time he might expect to receive a great reward. He was to make a search and seizure for the King, which could be more conveniently made by a Justice of the Peace than by a Captain of the Guard.

Monteagle, having interests in the plot beyond those of Cecil, to whom it was a work of political art and not a personal peril, was of all things

anxious that Catesby should escape unhurt. But he could not act in person. Though his peace was made with Cecil, it would never do for him to be known as giving a conspirator the advice and the means to fly. He spoke to Ward, of whom he had a great conceit; and on Sunday night, as Winter lay in bed, Ward went to his bedside and told him all; describing the letter left in the Hoxton lane, the public reading in the hall, the ride to London, the interview of Monteagle with the five lords; and urging him, as he loved Catesby, to ride over in the morning to White Webbs, and force him to take the boat for France.

At dawn on Monday, Winter left Montagu Close in search of Father Oldcorne and Jack Wright; and when he found them in their lodgings, they rode together to White Webbs with their doleful news. Catesby reeled beneath the blow, but his spirits soon leapt proudly up. Tom begged him to save himself, since he could no longer hope to serve his God. But Catesby would not hear of flight. He could not think their secret was betrayed. A fancy seized him that the news sent down by Ward was all

a trick, devised by his cousin Frank to drive him off. He would look farther into things than Tom saw need. The mine should be examined; for if Cecil had received such a letter from Monteagle, his very first care must have been to inspect the vault. Fawkes should go up to town and see. Winter urged the peril, to which Catesby answered that the vault was Fawkes' post, and that they need not tell him why he was sent in. Tuesday was spent in these debates, during which the servant James was told to look after their geldings, and buy what was wanted in Enfield town; anything to keep him from the house.

On Wednesday morning Fawkes rode up to town, and opening the door into the vaults, found everything as he had left it, down to the private mark which he had placed to show whether any one had passed the door. That night, he rode back to Enfield Chase, where the conspirators received his tidings with gladsome hearts. On Thursday, Winter rode in to town in search of Tresham, and finding him in Clerkenwell, proposed in Catesby's name, that they should meet next day in Barnet to confer upon their course.

Catesby, who knew his cousin capable of trick, could not believe him capable of treachery; but he had so far steeled his heart against him, that if they found him false, he told Tom Winter they must stab him on the spot.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOVEMBER, 1605.

On Friday, November 1st, Catesby and Tom rode over to Barnet, where Tresham came out from Clerkenwell to meet them. Catesby bluntly accused his cousin of having broken his oath and betrayed the secret. How? asked Frank, in an injured tone. By writing that letter which was left by the unknown messenger at Monteagle's door. It was a critical moment for Cousin Frank. If he had paused in his reply, the daggers of his comrades would have passed into his flesh; but he denied the charge with so much heat and scorn, that they were staggered and knew not how to treat him. Tresham was a pupil of the Jesuits; he held that lying and deceit were lawful in a good cause; and Garnet's treatise on Equivocation was known to be his favourite book; but they could not bring themselves to believe

that he would palter with an oath on the Primer, especially when that oath had been sworn for ends which his Jesuit teachers had at heart.

Frank made no secret of his opinion that the plot had failed, that everything was known to Cecil and Northampton, that his cousin was in peril and ought to fly; but he was not the less ready, in Catesby's presence, and under the spell of his haughty spirit, to pledge his soul, that if his cousin elected to stand his ground and wait events, he would live and die at Catesby's side. Perplexed in soul, the proud young squire could not consent to desert his post. Percy was still in the north, collecting rents on the Earl's estate; and Catesby would not hear of any change being made in their plans until that gentleman arrived in town. But if he could not fly, how could he leave his suspicious friend at large? A test of Frank's sincerity occurred to him:—he asked his cousin for two hundred pounds, to be spent in buying horses, arms and powder. If Frank had made his peace with Cecil, he would not dare to compromise himself afresh; he would refuse to pay the money; and then they would know with whom they had to deal. A poniard thrust would make him safe. If he paid the two hun-

dred pounds, he would be with them for life and death.

Frank promised them at once. He did so, as he afterwards declared, in the hope that when Catesby got the money, he would leave the country. He appointed to meet Tom Winter that very night in Clerkenwell, and put the gold into his hands.

Tom went to Clerkenwell, where Tresham paid him a hundred pounds; perhaps thinking, that if Catesby meant to go away, that sum was quite enough; but Tom was urgent for the balance; and Tresham, though he hoped to see no more of Tom, arranged to meet him the very next night in Lincoln's Inn Walk, whither he would bring the second of his two hundred pounds.

Catesby spent the Saturday (November 2) in buying arms. In the evening, Winter was at his post near Lincoln's Inn; to which Tresham came in the dark, with a very sore spirit and a bag of gold containing ninety pounds, the largest sum that he could raise in so short a time. Winter took his money and heard his speeches. More than ever, Frank felt certain that the plot was known; and once again he urged on Tom that Catesby should escape into France. He had a yacht in the river,

and this vessel he was willing to lend them, if they would only fly.

On Sunday morning (November 3) Ward paid another visit to Winter's room. The news he brought was graver, in his own opinion, than the first. The King, he said, was come to town, and having seen the Monteagle letter, was deeply moved by it; though he had urged the lords of his Council to maintain the strictest silence on the subject. Search, said Ward, was to be made immediately in the vaults of Parliament Place, particularly in the passages and chambers beneath the throne, and everything they had done would now be found.

Winter repaired to White Webbs with this bad news; but Catesby, though he listened to every word in fever, could not stoop to personal fear. No doubt—he reasoned—the letter would lead to search being made; but search was not discovery; and if Fawkes were on the spot, the heap of wood and coal might pass for what it seemed. While they were whispering to each other, Percy came to White Webbs, and this man's scorn of flight and failure overcame all previous doubts.

Percy had just arrived in town, where he hoped to hide himself at Rokewood's lodgings, in St. Giles's Fields. He had with him a large sum of

money, belonging to the Earl, his kinsman, for which he had immediate use; but feeling that to be in town without reporting himself at Sion was a dangerous thing, he sent Kit Wright to Isleworth, to mix with the grooms and pages, and to learn from them whether his arrival in London was known in the household. Late in the night, Kit brought him word to Mrs. More's lodgings, that his presence in London was known at Sion, in consequence of which it was resolved that he should go up the river next day and see the Earl.

Breaking up their conference at White Webbs, the conspirators rode back to town on Sunday evening; Fawkes to go down at once to Vinegar House, where he noticed that the mine was still untouched; the rest to steal about the streets, from Parliament Place to Whitehall Gardens, where they found, to their amazement, everything dull and quiet as on ordinary winter nights. No stir at the gate—no torches in the court—no tramp of men in Parliament Place! Relieved in mind by what they saw, they crept at last to their lodgings in St. Giles's Fields, and waited for the dawn.

On Monday morning (November 4), they heard from Fawkes that all was well at Vinegar House.

Who could now say their secret was known at Court? To-day was the King's; to-morrow would be theirs. If Winter was a little down, Catesby and Percy were elate and proud. What cause had they for drooping of the spirit? Their mine was perfect, and their man resolved. In less than thirty hours, their fate would be accomplished; the House of Lords a wreck, the King a cinder, the city stunned, the country helpless, and the crown their prize. Percy ran out and bought a watch, which he set in true time and sent to Fawkes, so that the watcher in the vault would be able to count the very seconds which their enemies had now to live. Greenway and Oldcorne had left for the country, with good news; the first for Goathurst and Coughton, the second for Hendlip Hall. Robarts was at Vinegar House. The final words were now passed from each man to his fellow, and the plotters parted for the day; each going to his post of duty, confident that the mine would now be sprung. Percy went off to Sion, where the Earl detained him to dine and sup. Tom Winter returned to Montagu Close. Rokewood and Kay remained in St. Giles's Fields, near stables in which Rokewood's horses stood, with the harness ready on their backs. Catesby

and Jack Wright rode out quietly to Enfield Chase, where they proposed to sleep, and trot on early next day towards Dunchurch, in the hope of reaching their rendezvous that night.

The plotters were hardly separated before a strange event occurred in Parliament Place. Lord Suffolk and Lord Monteagle came to Vinegar House, attended by a page, and passed into the vaults under the Prince's Chamber, and the House of Lords. Suffolk was the Lord Chamberlain, and both the peers were members of the persecuted church. No guards came with them, and they seemed to be light of mood, as though they were going through an idle form of search. Fawkes was in the vault, and watched their faces well. As they walked along the passages, they laughed and chatted with each other, and when Suffolk noticed Fawkes in the vault, he asked him in a light tone who he was, and whose was the heap of wood and coal. Fawkes answered that he was Mr. Percy's man, and that the fuel was laid up for his master's use. Lord Suffolk made some joke about his merry preparation for the Christmas fires, and then the two lords went their way. The search being over, Fawkes came out to let Percy know of the event, which had at once confirmed and removed his

fears. But Percy had not come back from Sion; but the upshot of this official search was so important that Fawkes took horse and followed him to Isleworth, where he was sitting at table with the Earl. Percy came out into the yard, and having heard the news went in again, made some excuse to Northumberland, and rode with Fawkes to town.

The two men parted for the last time near Tothill Fields; Fawkes going down into the vault, to draw on his jack-boots, to wind up his watch, and to light his lantern; Percy riding to Rokewood's lodging, where he had a room, to persuade his comrades who were still in town that all was now going well.

About ten o'clock, in the murky November night, Rokewood, Kay and Percy, crept from St. Giles's Fields into King Street, near the palace gates, to see and hear the news. Nothing they could see and hear alarmed them. The palace gates were open, and the court was free. Parliament Place was silent. In the streets of Westminster, not a sound of watch and guard was heard. In the palace, a light burned faintly here and there, as if some page were rather late; but the windows in the King's apartments were dark,

and the lords who had supped with him appeared to have gone to bed. Looking at the blank walls and silent courts of the royal quarter, could any man believe that James was conscious of what the morrow had in store?

When the clocks struck twelve, and yet no sign was made, the three night-watchers crawled past Charing Cross, up St. Martin's Lane, towards their lodgings in the lonely St. Giles's Fields, convinced in their hearts that long before noon next day the deed would be done that was to shake the world.

But while they were creeping through the darkness to their den, the spring had been made, and Fawkes was a prisoner to the law.

The train being laid and the lantern lit, Fawkes was coming up the stairs of his vault into the small enclosed court behind the Prince's Chamber, when he was suddenly seized by strong men, bound hands and feet, and searched. Sir Thomas Knyvet was earning his reward. The watch which he had just wound up, a packet of slow matches, a quantity of touch-wood, were taken from his person; and a dark lantern, with the wick alight, was found behind the cellar-door. 'What are you doing here?' asked Knyvet. 'Had you but taken

me inside,' said Fawkes, who saw with a soldier's quickness that all was lost, 'I should have blown you up, the house, myself, and all.' Securing his prisoner, Knyvet proceeded to search the vault. The casks of powder were soon laid bare, and a rough account of them set down. From the cellars he went into Vinegar House, where he arrested Gibbins the porter, and Robarts the priest.

In a few minutes, Knyvet was in the King's presence at Whitehall; and in a few months, he was a member of that House of Lords the frame of which he had so boldly saved.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HUNTED DOWN.

BETIMES on Tuesday morning, Catesby and Jack Wright were in the saddle, winding through Enfield Chase towards Ashby St. Leger, which they meant to reach that night by easy stages; unaware that Knyvet had got possession of their mine, and that Fawkes was lying on his wisp of straw in the darkest dungeon of the Tower.

The plotters in St. Giles's Fields were roused in the night by news that Fawkes had been seized in the vault; and some of them crept into the streets to learn whether this report was true. Kit Wright ran off to Montagu Close, expecting to find Tom Winter, who had gone away to his lodgings near the Strand. But in the Close he heard a cry and parley which turned him sick with fear. A noble lord was calling under Monteagle's window, 'Rise! and come with

me to Essex House! I am going to call up my Lord of Northumberland!' Kit listened to what was said, and from the hasty words then dropped he learned that all was known. At five o'clock, he found Winter in his lodgings near the Strand, and told him what he had heard under Monteagle's window. Tom leapt out of bed. 'Go back, Mr. Wright,' he begged, 'and learn what you can about Essex Gate.' In a short time Kit returned, saying surely all was known; for the lords were then with the Earl in council, and one Leyton had just ridden at full speed from the door. The business seemed high and pressing, for the lords came out to see him off. He had dashed up Fleet Street. 'Go you then to Mr. Percy,' whispered Tom; 'for sure it is for him they seek. Bid him be gone. I will stay and see the uttermost.' They parted at the door. Kit found his comrade Percy in the street; a word sufficed to warn him; and the two men leapt to horse, and rode away through Highgate, with the cry of mounting messengers in their track.

Percy had arranged his plans for leaving town, in case of failure, with such cunning art, that for many hours the Government were un-

certain in what direction he had fled. A messenger was sent to Ware, as Cecil inferred that he would take the great north road; but the postmaster replied that he had not passed since Saturday, when he came up to town. The first news heard by Cecil was from Archbishop Bancroft, who reported that Percy had been met that morning near Croydon, where he cried, as he rode along, that all London was up in arms. The next news came from the Lord Chief Justice Popham, who reported that Percy was at Gravesend, where measures had been taken for his arrest. Later in the day, Sir William Waad, Lieutenant of the Tower, sent word to Whitehall, that Sir Edward Yorke, in coming up to town that day, had seen him riding northward in disguise.

Winter passed down the Strand into Whitehall Yard, where he found the gates were closed and guarded; and thence down King Street, on his way to Parliament Place. The street was stopped, and soldiers were drawn across the road. No one was allowed to pass. Mixing with the crowd, he heard that a plot had been discovered for blowing up the King and Queen next day, and that the ruffian who was to have

fired the train had been captured with his lantern and his match. Why need he wait for more? Stealing swiftly to the stables where his gelding lay, Tom jumped into the saddle, and quitted London by the nearest lanes; not for the rendezvous at Ashby St. Leger, but for what he hoped would be the safer asylum of his brother's house.

Kay hung about town until ten o'clock, and then took horse.

Young Rokewood was the last to fly. Proud of his great stud, and his greater prowess, the Suffolk squire had placed relays of horses on the road from London to Dunchurch, so that when he rode down to the hunting-party he could devour the distance with amazing speed. Mounting his horse at eleven o'clock, he soon came up with his comrades on the road. At Finchley Common, he overtook Kay, whence they tore on together, until Kay, getting tired of his pace, fell off. Near Brickhill, he overtook Catesby and Jack Wright, who had not yet heard the news; and a piece beyond Fenny Stratford, they met with Percy and Kit Wright. From this village they held on together, pushing past Stony Stratford and Towcester at their utmost speed. Percy and Jack

Wright, less nobly mounted than their fellows, had to cast away their cloaks in that furious race for life.

In two hours Rokewood rode thirty miles on a single horse, and made the whole distance of eighty-one miles in less than seven hours.

Unconscious of the fate then speeding towards them through the dark November night, two companies of country squires were waiting at Ashby St. Leger and Dunchurch in a riotous mood of mind. News having come down that the mine was safe and all going well at Westminster, Digby left his wife, his priest, and the two ladies, on Sunday morning, safe at Coughton, and came to Dunchurch with various gentlemen ready for the chase. The word was passed round the shires, and men were hurrying from every side towards the rendezvous. Robert Winter left his house near Worcester, and trotting hard all day arrived in Grafton —where his wife's father, John Talbot, a rich old Catholic squire, then lived. The Littletons, leaving Hagley at the same moment, met Winter on Monday night in Coventry, where they slept at an inn. Next day, the fifth of November, they pricked forward to Dunchurch, where they found Sir Robert Digby of Coleshill and a strong muster

of Catholic squires and their men, mounted on strong horses and armed with guns and pikes. The Littletons put up their horses and joined their friends in the village, while Winter rode on to Ashby, where he expected in a few hours to see his chief and receive the word to march. Ashby was full of guests, and Lady Catesby was just sitting down with them to supper at six o'clock, when a clatter of hoofs was heard in the court, and a moment later her son himself dashed in among them, white with passion and begrimed with dirt.

One word told all that there was left to tell.

Snatching down sword and lance from the baronial hall, the gentlemen rushed towards the stables, mounted their geldings in the dark, and made for Dunchurch, to see their comrades and resolve on what should now be done. The coming of Catesby in such a style threw everything ajar; and when the country gentlemen saw Digby and Catesby talking apart, in eager tremulous tones, they felt sure that the scheme had failed, that the Government was master, and that the time had come for them to fly. Sir Robert Digby left. Humphrey Littleton also left. By twos and threes the company thinned, as the minutes waned, until, about nine o'clock, the army of Dunchurch

was found to consist of few beyond those who had been sworn accomplices in the plot.

Fierce was the speech, insane the counsel, offered at Dunchurch that night; but Catesby's overpowering spirit at length compelled them to decide. Fawkes being taken prisoner, they had to count on his telling—under torture—what he knew. Their lives were forfeit to the law; and none but madmen could expect the King to overlook their crime. If they wished to live, they must strike for life. One chance was left them; an appeal to the Catholic people! Let the cry be raised. In Warwickshire they could not hold their ground; but Wales, in which they had recently invoked a powerful saint, lay open to their arms. Wales was sternly Catholic in creed. The country was difficult, the population warlike; and a religious war would feed itself on every passion of the Cymric heart.

Catesby's counsel being adopted, the meeting broke up about ten o'clock, and the company got on the road for Norbrook, which they reached in the dead of night, and rested their geldings for an hour. Digby snatched a pen and wrote a line to tell Garnet that the mine had failed, to ask his advice, and to beg that he would meet them at

Robert Winter's house. Bates was sent with this note to Coughton, that he, as one sworn to the secret, might urge the good Father not to abandon them in their hour of need. Then, mounting once more, the band pushed forward in the early dawn towards Alcaster and Huddington, which they reached about two o'clock in the afternoon. Tom Winter had just come in. They were weaker in force than when they left Norbrook, for no one joined them on the road, and some of their stragglers had dropped behind. The country was rising round them on every side. In every stable from which they stole a horse, in every shop from which they snatched a gun, they raised up swarms of enemies. Men of all classes were on their track; the sheriffs of Worcester and Warwick being well prepared for such a chase by the recent musters and their admirable drill. How were they to turn, unless the Jesuits came?

A scene occurred at Coughton Hall. When Bates dashed up to the door, he found the Prefect in the hall, and gave him hastily his note. As Garnet opened the paper, Greenway came in, and asked him what the matter was. Garnet read the letter aloud, on which Greenway exclaimed, 'Here is no tarrying for you and me.' Bates begged that

one of the Fathers at least would ride across to Huddington and comfort his young master. 'I would go to him,' said Greenway, 'though it were to a thousand deaths; but my going would destroy the Society.' Bates begged that they would come, and come at once. Then the two Jesuits stood apart, consulting in whispers, for half an hour, at the end of which Greenway came out into the open air, attired in a suit of rich-coloured satin, covered with gold lace, and a horse being brought round from the stable, he got on his back and accompanied Bates to Robert Winter's house.

The interview between Greenway and Catesby was in private. When it was over, Greenway took horse and rode away to Hendlip Hall. When the priest was gone away from them, Catesby called his companions, Rokewood, Percy, Morgan, and the rest, and begged of them to confess their sins, and make up their souls for death. Father Hart, a Jesuit living in Winter's house, received them one by one in his closet, and having heard the story of their crime absolved them without a word.

The thing had to be done in haste, for Catesby was convinced that the hour was nigh

when they must either die like soldiers or hang like dogs.

The confession over, and the absolution given, they took to horse once more, going straight up north through Stourbridge, to Stephen Littleton's house at Holbeach, in Staffordshire; where Catesby had a mind to make his stand and die, as he had lived, in conflict with the law.

Having crossed the borders of a county, he supposed that his friends were safe from pursuit for a few hours, while the next sheriff and his bands were getting ready; and as much of their powder had been soaked in crossing a river, he asked Morgan, Grant, and Rokewood, to assist him in the dangerous task of drying it before the kitchen fire. An accident ensued. A live coal fell into the platter on which the powder was spread—an explosion took place—and the four conspirators were blown off their seats, and their faces blackened and burnt. A bag of powder, big enough to have burst a castle, was carried through the roof unsinged. Yet the four men were so scorched and burnt, that when their comrades came into the kitchen, they shrank from the black and ghastly figures as from so many imps. A weak

and superstitious fellow, Littleton stole away from his house in the night; and when morning dawned, the servants saw that Sir Everard and Robert Winter were also gone. Bates followed them; and then the bolder spirits of the plot were left alone. Tom Winter, stirring early, met Stephen Littleton, who told him Catesby was dead, and urged him to save his life by flight. 'First, I will go and bury the body of our friend,' said Tom; on hearing which Littleton slipped from the yard and left his house. When Winter found the spectres, he asked them what they would do? 'We mean to die here,' they answered in their pain. 'What you do, I do,' said the faithful Tom.

About eleven o'clock, Sir Richard Walsh and his company beset the house, and began to fire into the court. Tom Winter was the first to fall, though his wound was not mortal. Jack Wright was then shot dead; and after him fell Kit his brother. Then the assailants broke into the court, and Rokewood, shot already in the arm, was pierced in the body by a lance. 'Stand by me, Mr. Tom,' cried Catesby, 'and we will die together.' Tom was too much hurt to stand. 'Sir,' he said, respectful to the last, 'I have lost the use of my right arm, and I fear that will cause me

to be taken.' One shot struck Percy and Catesby down: a shot that won a pension from King James; and then the fight was over, and the house secured.

Rokewood and Winter, Morgan and Grant, were taken prisoners. Catesby and Percy stood in sore need of help; but the only aid they could get from man was such as added to the pangs of death: for, while the sheriff was securing his prisoners, and searching the house, the boors of the Black country swarmed into the court, and finding the wounded men lying on the ground, they stripped them stark naked—stole their clothes and ornaments—exposed their gashes to the air—and caused them to expire in the accumulating agonies of bleeding, thirst, and frost.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE TOWER.

In less than a week from the assault of Holbeach house, the laymen of the plot were either dead or in the Tower. Catesby, Percy, Jack and Kit Wright, were buried near the spot where they had fallen; but, by Northampton's orders, they were dug up from the earth and hung. Fawkes, Rokewood, Kay, Tom Winter, Stephen Littleton, Digby, Tresham, Bates, and Robert Winter, were dispersed in the several prisons, under charge of Waad, who brought them one by one before Northampton and the Lords Commissioners, sitting in the Powder Plot Room.

Their lives were clearly forfeit to the law, and Cecil knew that he could hang them all without incurring the reproach of dealing hardly with their church.

The news of this plot was heard by the old

English Catholics with more astonishment than rage, though the expression of their anger was both loud and deep. The priests were still more prompt to denounce it than their flocks. The venerable Archpriest, George Blackwell, took up his pen, before a single man had yet been killed or captured in the shires, and in a brief address to the Catholic clergy stigmatised the plot as a detestable contrivance, in which no true Catholic could have a share; as an abominable thing, contrary to Holy Writ, to the decrees of Councils, and to the instructions of their spiritual guides. Blackwell told his clergy to exhort their flocks to peace and obedience, and to avoid falling into snares.

While Blackwell was composing his letter, Ben Jonson, the poet, was standing in the Council chamber of Whitehall, denouncing the plot on behalf of his fellow-laymen, and offering his personal service in pursuing the gangs who had brought destruction on his church. The poet was then about thirty years of age; for seven years he had been a Catholic; but he was a Catholic of the old English school; a pupil of St. Edward, not of St. Ignatius; and the part which he proposed to play in this drama was in keeping with his character

and his creed. In his youth he had fought against Philip in the Low Countries, and after his conversion to Rome he had remained an enemy of the Jesuits and of Spain. A crime like that proposed by Catesby was one to fire his turbulent and generous veins with fury; crime in the name of religion, murder in the cause of God! He went down to Whitehall, had a talk with Cecil, and on a blank form being given to him, he undertook to find an honest priest who could help in running the conspirators to earth. A form being placed in his hands, he went off to the Venetian embassy, where he reckoned on finding the Catholic chaplain eager to assist him in his search; and he was right in his belief: for that chaplain told him he had come on a good service; one in which a man of conscience, who loved his country, must heartily engage. The chaplain, a foreigner, said he would seek out an English priest, who knew the Jesuits and their haunts, and would bring him to Cecil's chamber at Whitehall. But the poet's project led to nothing; for the priests, alarmed by the popular rage, which took no note of the difference between the children of St. Edward and the pupils of St. Ignatius, dared not come forth into the light. Ben's indignation was extreme; and he wrote to

tell Cecil that the shame was so deep among the Catholics, that five hundred gentlemen would abandon their religion in a week.

The Council could hang the prisoners without reproach, and great would be the gains accruing from their death. The Puritan towns would be delighted, and the Puritan burgesses more pliant to the Crown. The King could get his name into the calendar and the service-books. But Cecil and Northampton had other purposes in mind. They wished not only to discredit and destroy the Jesuit agency in England, but to cripple still more the partizans of war, by ruining the powerful Earl who was now their chief.

Week after week passed by, and the prisoners were not tried for their offence. In fact, they were undergoing a course of daily trial by Northampton in the Tower. Here they underwent a thousand interrogatories from Coke, a thousand hostilities from Waad, and a thousand treacheries from Forsett. This Forsett was one of Northampton's spies; a useful and despicable wretch, whom his master employed in over-hearing and reporting the private conversations of prisoners with each other. Cecil's object in allowing these proceedings was, not to obtain a knowledge of Jesuit com-

plicity in the plot, but evidence which could be adduced in a court of law.

The prisoners had a conscience in the matter of a curious kind; for long after they had taken to accusing each other in their confessions, they continued to screen their priests. Both Fawkes and Winter affirmed, that when they took that oath on the Primer in Butcher Row, Father Gerard, who gave them the sacrament, was ignorant of the purpose of their oath. The names of Garnet, Greenway, Oldcorne, never passed their lips. But the object of their lying words and lying silence was to screen their persons, not to clear their fame. Of Father Owen they spoke quite freely; for Owen was beyond the reach of English law.

Though Cecil was an artist in deceit, he was amazed by the complexity of lying which he had now to study. Sir Everard Digby seemed on the whole, apart from his share in the plot, a man of honourable mind; yet Digby, while a prisoner in the Tower, considered himself free to say and to unsay, from hour to hour. He told his questioners that he was not sworn; that he went to Dunchurch for the hunt and nothing more; that he was only with the band two

days in all; that he quitted them of his own free will. Next day, on Fawkes being set before him, face to face, the poor young fellow told some part of the truth, and justified his former course of lies. He wrote to his wife a flood of letters and a stock of doggrel rhymes. 'If I had thought there had been the least sin in it' (the scheme of wholesale murder), 'I would not have been in it for all the world.' Digby had been taught that assassination, in a certain cause, was not a sin; that a false statement, in a certain cause, was not a lie.

Fawkes was pressed more closely for confessions against the Catholic peers; and mainly on his avowals, the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Montagu, Lord Stourton, and Lord Mordaunt, were brought into the Tower.

Tresham was the greatest mystery of all. For many days after Catesby's flight, Cousin Frank remained in London, going about the streets as usual, and even offering to assist the Council in seeking out the fugitives. Fawkes mentioned him, as one of the sworn confederates; yet for one whole week he was left at large; and it is evident from his ways of life that he felt no fear of being arrested. At length he

was committed to the Tower; and Sir Thomas Lake, the King's private secretary, considering him as a lost man, applied for a grant of Pipewell Manor, one of his estates, which James assured him he should have when it was forfeited to the crown! He made a cautious statement, saying he had seen Catesby and Winter, and had given them money, but was not a member of the plot, and had only paid the money in order to tempt his cousin to cross the seas. He seemed to know that the Council were bent on saving Lord Monteagle, and he fancied that Monteagle could not be saved unless he himself were spared. Monteagle's name appeared in all the chief confessions, but a tiny slip of paper was pasted over this name in every document that would have to be produced in court.

Tom Winter, in the ample declarations which he made in the Tower, described his mission into Spain, and mentioned the names of Tresham, Catesby, Lord Monteagle, and Father Greenway, as the men who sent him to Madrid. Greenway was known to have escaped, and Tom had therefore no concern to hide his share in the plots conducted from Enfield Chase; but he manfully refrained from saying one word that

could have clouded Garnet's fame. Tresham was much more frank. He said that Father Garnet, as well as Father Greenway, had been present at their meetings in Enfield Chase, and was only too well acquainted with the mission into Spain.

The art of lying was a favourite subject of study to cousin Frank, in whose house were found two treatises on the art: one, in favour of equivocation, by Father Garnet; the other, against equivocation, by Father Blackwell. The Jesuit's convert, following the Jesuit's rule, betrayed, without a kiss, the master from whom he had learnt his art.

A few days after Frank gave his evidence against the Prefect he was reported sick; on which his wife, Ann Tresham, applied for leave to attend him in his cell, along with her old servant William Vavasour, an admirable scribe, who could write in many differing styles. Mrs. Tresham, a woman of the Dacre mint, procured from the sick man a paper, purporting to be a full denial of his former charge against the Jesuit. A singular production was this paper. It began by saying that the man who signed it had been guilty of an infamous falsehood; it went on to say that he was now about to tell the truth—on his

salvation; it then asserted that Frank Tresham had not seen Father Garnet for sixteen years—had never heard from him in all these years—and had no knowledge of his being privy to the mission into Spain! The form was no less curious than the contents. Not being written in Tresham's hand, some evidence was wanting to prove it his. Mrs. Tresham said it was in her hand, and copied down by her from her husband's lips. A marginal note, in another hand, and signed with the name of W. Vavasour, affirmed that such was the truth.

On the morrow Frank was dead; in fact, he died the very night on which the document was signed.

Every word in that paper was a lie, and both Mrs. Tresham and her servant knew it to be a lie. During those sixteen years Mrs. Tresham had constantly received Father Garnet in her house. Nor was the paper in Mrs. Tresham's hand. As both the lady and the scribe confessed later on, it was written by Vavasour himself.

As yet the evidence of guilt, which Cecil could produce in court, was far too slight to warrant him in arresting the Jesuit chief. A course was taken with the servant Bates, as one less likely to be cunning in his fence. The man, led on from

point to point, and hardly seeing the drift of what he said, not only spoke of his confession to Greenway, but of his ride from Norbrook to Coughton, of his scene with Garnet in the hall, and of his night journey to Huddington in company with the gentleman in coloured satin and golden lace. When asked where Greenway could be found, he answered that he thought he was living at Hendlip Hall.

Feeling that the tools of Philip were in his grasp, the Secretary of State proclaimed the three Jesuits, under the style of John Gerard, Henry Garnet, and Oswald Tesmond. The very same day he wrote a curious note to Anne, Lady Markham, of Beskwood Park.

This starless creature had been suffered to reside at Beskwood after her husband's liberation from the Tower, on condition of his going to live abroad. But life was misery to her while Sir Griffin ate the bread of exile, and by force of brooding on her grief, which she attributed, not unfairly, to the Jesuits, she fell into such obliquity of moral view, as to think herself justified in doing them every sort of wrong. She had written a note to Cecil, hinting that her place among the Catholics, as one who had suffered in their cause,

was such as enabled her to hear and see many things which it behoved the King to learn. Encouraged to speak out, she answered that certain persons then in custody could tell where the missing Jesuits could be found. From Hurleston, then in the Marshalsea, he might hear of Father Gerard; from Digby, then in the Tower, he might hear of Garnet. Cecil, while leading her on by the hope of a pardon for her husband, told her that Gerard, the priest who had sworn the confederates in Butcher Row, was wanted the first and most. To this communication she replied, that while she must be wary in her steps, lest the Catholics should suspect her of playing them false, she was eager to do his bidding and to win his favour. Garnet and Gerard, she could tell him, had been hiding in the house of Mrs. Vaux at Harrowden, and a stricter watch for two days longer would have forced them to come out. Garnet was gone, but Gerard was in the shires; and she offered to inveigle him to Beskwood Park, and then deliver him up a prisoner to the King.

Cecil was free in promises. In letters dated from Whitehall, he told her he was loath to prosecute the Jesuits, but on finding that they had been principals in the plot, he had no choice.

Accepting gladly her proposal to ensnare Father Gerard, he sent her down a blank form of warrant, so that her people could arrest him the moment he set foot within her gates.

Lady Markham failed in her treacherous scheme, through the zeal of one Rutland Molyneux, a Nottingham squire, who, suspecting her purpose, met Father Gerard on the skirts of Sherwood Forest, and warned him of the peril into which he was about to run. The Father made for Harwich, where he was lucky enough to find a boat.

Greenway came back to London, where, in a new disguise, he hoped to escape pursuit. One day he mixed with a crowd of people in the street, who were reading a proclamation for his arrest. One man in the crowd began to eye him sharply; and on his moving off uneasily this fellow followed him, and seizing him by the arm exclaimed, 'You are known; I arrest you in the King's name; you must go with me before the Council at Whitehall.' Very quietly saying there was some mistake, the Jesuit offered to go with him; and they walked on together, chatting, until they came to a deserted street, when Greenway sprang upon the fellow, threw him down, and got away. He hid himself for a few

days in Essex, and then took boat for Flanders, which he safely reached.

Short shrift was given to the prisoners. Digby, Robert Winter, Grant, and Bates, were taken from the Tower and hung near Paul's Cross; while Fawkes, Kay, Rokewood, and Tom Winter, were drawn on hurdles, hung, and bowelled in Palace Yard.

The Powder Plot was over; but the Jesuit agents of Spain were still to seek.

CHAPTER XX.

SEARCH FOR GARNET.

If Garnet and Oldcorne had chosen to escape beyond sea they could easily have found the means. The Council would have been glad to see them go, for the flight of Garnet, as a broken and ruined man, would have been more than evidence of his guilt; it would have been a public confession that his mission from the King of Spain had failed.

Cecil drew a clear distinction between Garnet as a Spanish agent, and Garnet as a Catholic priest. In the first of these characters he was an outcast; in the second he was a citizen bound to obey the law. Cecil and Northampton were eager to prove that the old Spanish policy was a failure; and such a proof the Prefect was determined not to give.

Hence, when Greenway, dressed in his satin suit, rode off with Bates from Coughton, Garnet

and the ladies kept in their rooms, avoiding strangers, and being served by their faithful people, until the news arrived that Digby was overtaken by the hue and cry near Dudley. Digby, who was weak of tongue, would be forced to speak, and the Prefect felt that Coughton was no longer a place in which he could safely hide. The country was up in arms, and every house suspected of having a Catholic mistress was certain to be searched. Where could he and his females hide until the uproar passed? While he was scheming, Oldcorne arrived from Hendlip Hall with an invitation for himself and train; when he moved, together with Ann Vaux and his servant Little John, to Mrs. Abington's friendly house.

Hendlip Hall, a Tudor house of vast extent, which stood on high ground and swept the country for many miles, had been recently built by Thomas Abington, on plans supplied by Little John, as a hiding-place for priests. Almost every room in the pile had a recess, a passage, a trap-door, and a secret stair. The walls were hollow, the ceilings false. The chimneys had double flues; a passage for the fire, and a second for the priest. One hollow in the wall was covered with most cunning art; a narrow crevice, next to the fire-

place, into which a reed was laid from Mrs. Abington's bed-room; so that soup and wine could be passed by her into the recess, without the fact being noticed from any other room. Except the builders and the Jesuits, no one had a key to the whole maze of secrets; but the local gentry were aware that the Hall had been contrived for the concealment of priests; and when the proclamation against the Jesuits came out, Sir Henry Bromley, of Holt Castle, an active justice of the peace, was not surprised to receive an order from the Council to search the house. His orders were minute. He was to surround the Hall with his men; to set a guard at every door; to suffer no one to come in, no one to go out, until the priests were found. The servants were to be watched by day and night, to see that they carried no food into strange places. The dining-room was to be carefully examined, and the wainscot pulled down to see if any passage lay beyond. The cellar floors were to be broached. Every room in the house was to be measured, so as to see whether the lower apartments corresponded with the upper in length and breadth. Even the chimney-stacks were to be pierced and probed.

The searchers came upon Mrs. Abington with so much secresy and suddenness, that the priests

and their servants had to run like rats into their holes. Garnet and Oldcorne crept into the crevice near the fireplace, from which the reed for passing soups and wine conducted into Mrs. Abington's room. Chambers and Little John, their servants, hid themselves in a kind of cupboard. No preparation for their stay in these hiding-places had been made. The priests' recess was nearly filled with books and lumber, and the only food which it contained was some pots of marmalade. The servants had no food at all, and their den was stuffed with what Bromley calls 'Popish trash.'

When the justice showed his warrant from the Council, Mrs. Abington assured him that no one was in hiding at Hendlip. Abington, her husband, was then from home; but, on his coming to the Hall, he confirmed the statement of his wife; adding that he knew nothing of Father Garnet personally, and had not seen Father Gerard for several years. Bromley was surprised; but his orders being strict he proceeded to search the house, to measure the rooms, and to count the beds. With a list of the family in his hand, he passed through every chamber, noticing which was occupied and which was not. He found more beds in the rooms than guests; and on carefully testing the

condition of these beds, he found that some of those which were said to be unused were *warm.*

Mrs. Abington kept her room, in anger at the search being made. Bromley would have had her quit the Hall while his troops were there; but she refused to go, and he dared not turn a lady of her quality—the sister of so great a man as Lord Monteagle—out-of-doors. He could not guess her reason for so obstinately shutting herself up in a single room—eating there, drinking there, sleeping there—day and night.

But after some days of careful watch had been kept in every room—except the one in which Mrs. Abington lay—a panel in the wainscot opened, and two spectres stepped into the hall. The ghosts were Chambers and Little John, whom Bromley took to be the Jesuit and his man. Mrs. Abington pretended not to know them; but the facts were soon discovered; and the search was then continued for their masters with a warmer hope.

The crevice in which Garnet and Oldcorne lay was low and strait; and being filled with books and furniture, the Fathers could neither stand on their feet nor lie down at length. Their flesh began to swell and their bones to ache; they

could hear the searchers tapping at the walls; and from their talk and laughter as they called to each other, they learned that Chambers and Little John were caught. 'We were very merry and content within,' said Garnet afterwards, when describing the scene to Ann Vaux; 'and heard the searchers every day most curious over us, which made me think the place would be found.'

But as day after day slid past, without result, the magistrate, after setting a watch in every room and corridor, rode home to Holt Castle on his own affairs, for the sake of a little rest; and while he was absent from Hendlip, more precise and positive news of Oldcorne being hid in Mrs. Abington's house was received from Worcester jail.

Humphrey Littleton was being tried for his life in that city; and this poor fellow, whose only crime had been a desire to command a troop of horse against the Dutch, was highly sore against his old confessor. On quitting the gangs at Dunchurch, Humphrey sent a pressing prayer for Oldcorne to join him at once, and tell him what he should now do; but the Jesuit, feeling safe at Hendlip, and hearing that the shires were up in arms, declined to come; on which Hum-

phrey whimpered that his confessor had drawn him into rebellion and then left him to his fate. So long, however, as a chance of life remained to him, he held his tongue; but when the day for hanging him at Worcester had been fixed, he sent his keeper to tell the sheriff and justices, that if his sentence were respited he could render much service to the King. Of course, the respite was given, and a magistrate went to his cell, where he heard from the prisoner's lips that Oldcorne was concealed in a recess at Hendlip; and that one of the servants then in the jail could take a poursuivant to the spot.

Elated by this news, Sir Henry rode back to Hendlip, and, renewing his search, soon found the hollow in the wall. The soldier who slid the panel, seeing two men darkly in the hole, ran back in fear, expecting them to fire. A crowd was soon at the door, to whom Garnet spoke, bidding them be quiet, and saying they would yield themselves in peace. Bromley recognised Garnet from the proclamation. But the Father would not give his name. 'You are a learned man?' said Bromley. 'Let me be taken before my Lord of Salisbury,' answered Garnet; 'he will know me.' Cecil's cunning courtesies had so far

told upon the Prefect, that he thought himself an object of the Secretary's grace.

Abington, arrested with the lie on his lips, was driven, with the four Jesuits whom he had feloniously concealed, to Worcester in Bromley's coach. 'I hoped to have lodged you in a citizen's house,' said Bromley to the Father; 'but I cannot, and you must lie in the jail.' Garnet started at the word; 'A God's name, I hope you will provide we have not irons, for we are lame already, and shall not be able to ride after it to London.' Bromley said he would see to it. He put Garnet into a private room, and left him for a time. On his return, he placed the prisoners in his coach once more, and drove them to Holt Castle, where they remained, as guests in his house, well lodged, and sitting at table with Lady Bromley and her people, until Candlemas, to recruit their strength. A banquet was then given, and in the midst of dinner Sir Henry called for wine, and standing up, bareheaded, drank to the King. The Prefect rose to his feet, and pledged the health, as he says, 'in a reasonable glass.'

Ann Vaux and Mrs. Abington were left at Hendlip Hall.

At length, the cavalcade set out from Holt

Castle. 'I parted from the gentlewomen, who were very kind to me,' wrote the Jesuit, 'as also all the house.' The journey was made by easy stages, and a treacherous kindness met them at every turn. From Bromley, Garnet heard that it was by Cecil's express command that he was used so well. He rode the best horse in the company. He travelled at the King's expense. He halted when he pleased, and ate and drank of the best. On the road he met, as it seemed by chance, Dean Abbott and Dean Barlow, two of the court divines. They had a long talk together at an inn, and Garnet was struck by the air of respect which the two Deans put on. Yet these divines were the bitterest enemies of his Order and his Church. When Bromley arrived in London with his charge, he lodged the Prefect in the Gatehouse, near Whitehall; Abington in the Fleet; Little John and Chambers in the Tower.

On St. Valentine's eve Garnet was marched through a crowd of people to the Council chamber of Whitehall, where Cecil and Northampton received him with the treacherous courtesy that had already thrown him off his guard. When he knelt, they bade him stand up. When he began by protesting his innocence of Catesby's

plot, 'I wish,' said Cecil, mildly, 'you would not protest so earnestly, since we have certain proof.' With smiling courtesy Cecil inquired his opinion about equivocation, about the doctrine of excommunication, and about the Pope's dispensing power. 'You see, Mr. Garnet,' he insinuated, 'we deal not with you in matters of religion, as of your priesthood, or of the real presence.' He only asked a question about the oath. Garnet was pleased, as he wrote to Ann Vaux, 'to be accounted a traitor without, and not within, the plot.' But he was cautious in what he said. To Cecil's question, whether it was held by Catholics to be lawful to take up arms against the King? he answered, that no one could rise against his prince unless that prince were excommunicated by the Pope. He thought King James was not excommunicate; and even if he were so, he declared that no one could proceed against him without the Pope's express command. A Catholic could only rise against heretics. Being pressed to say whether the English were not held to be heretics, he answered, 'The religion is heretical—of the persons I cannot judge.' Cecil put the question: 'May the Pope excommunicate our King?' Garnet replied by the evasion: 'The

Pope is successor to St. Peter, to whom Christ said, *Pasce oves meas*, and so he may excommunicate Kings.' Cecil urged him to say 'Our King;' but he refused to do so, as he alleged, 'out of reverence.' 'Could the Pope release subjects from their obedience?' 'There is a canon, *Nos Sanctorum*, wherein is such a rule, which lies beyond my power to abridge.' The questioning by Cecil and Northampton lasted two hours, after which Coke attacked him for one hour more. Garnet refused to name his partners in the mission, and even to admit the names by which he was known to his penitents.

Next day, St. Valentine's day, he was committed to the Tower; to a 'horrible dungeon,' probably the Keep; but after suffering two bad nights in his miserable den, he was removed, for a reason which he could not guess, into Leslie's old chamber, on the lower tier of the Bloody tower.

'I am allowed every meal,' he wrote to Ann Vaux, who had followed him to London, 'a good draught of excellent claret wine; and I am liberal with myself and neighbours for good respects, to allow also of my purse some sack: and this is the greatest charge I shall be at.'

Contrary to their nature, Coke and Waad, both

acting on a hint from court, were civil to the prisoner. Even Popham's awful brow unbent when Garnet came into the Powder Plot Room. During one of his examinations, Garnet said he did not fear to die, for he should die innocently, and death would be welcome. 'That were a pity,' said Coke, 'for you are a man to serve your king and country.' One day, when Coke was talking of the time at Hendlip, Garnet said, 'If I had a Calendar I could tell, for I think it was St. Sebastian's day.' 'You have saints for every day?' 'We have for the most part,' answered Garnet. 'Well,' quoth Coke, 'you shall have no place in the Calendar.' 'I am not worthy of a place in the Calendar,' said Garnet, 'but I hope to have a place in heaven.' Waad rallied him about Mrs. Brooksby's child, born at White Webbs; but Popham came to his defence by saying that Brooksby, her husband, lived in the house. Brooksby was bald, and Coke could not resist the opportunity of saying that the baby was seen with a shaven crown.

Once, indeed, Garnet was drawn by these treacherous pleasantries, into making what he thought a serious offer to the King. Waad was saying, what he knew to be in Cecil's mind, 'The

Jesuits' Order shall be dissolved upon this as the Templars' was;' to which the Prefect answered, 'Private faults do not prejudice the whole.' 'The Jesuits shall now all out of England,' added Sir William. Garnet then made his offer: 'If the King would grant free liberty to other Papists, I will presently send away all Jesuits.' Popham started. 'That is more than you can do?' he urged. 'I will try,' said the Prefect, making to his judge a most dangerous confession of his power over that band of outlaws.

Well lodged, well fed, with plenty of sack and claret, with civil judges, and obsequious keepers, Garnet was highly pleased with what was going on. If he could have his 'morning delight,' he wrote to tell Ann Vaux he should be happy. What his 'morning delight' was, we can only guess; the lady knew, no doubt.

An obliging keeper carried his letter to Ann; and in less than a week after it was sent, Ann Vaux was herself a prisoner in the Tower.

CHAPTER XXI.

END OF THE ENGLISH JESUITS.

THE whole group of English Jesuits were now in charge of Sir William Waad.

Father Fisher was in the Keep, on the walls of which he inscribed his name. Garnet and Oldcorne, after passing some fifty hours in a dark hole, had been placed in adjoining rooms under Raleigh's lodgings in the Bloody tower. George and Little John were thrown into separate dungeons, dismal and far apart. Abington alone was in the Fleet.

But where was Father Robarts all this while? This Father, the companion of Fawkes in Vinegar House, was taken, as it were, in the fact. His guilt was evident. No jury could have doubted for a moment that he knew of the mine being laid. Near him, in his room, a quantity of Popish books and papers had been seized. These papers were of moment, and in the first hours of their seizure they had been freely used by Coke. Yet from the night of Fawkes' arrest, the Father and his

papers disappear from view. Robarts was afterwards seen at large; but what became of him during those five months in which Cecil and Northampton were routing and destroying the Jesuit conspirators, no soul can tell. This sudden disappearance of a man who had come direct from Rome to stand by the side of Fawkes, is one of the darkest mysteries of that mysterious time.

One day, a keeper, of whom Garnet thought he had made a friend by giving him a little sack and a little coin, told the Prefect as a secret that his comrade, Father Oldcorne, lay in the adjoining room. Garnet listened to his words, and then the man, encouraged to go on, pointed to a slide in the wall, and told him that on pushing it back he might converse with his friend. But the thing must be done with care, as keepers might be about who were unfriendly to him, and then the panel would be nailed up. Garnet tried the panel, and found his keeper right. Oldcorne was there; and the two Jesuits, after a short prayer in Latin, made confessions to each other; beating their hands the while upon their hearts.

Two spies, named Forsett and Locherson, had been so placed by Waad, that they could hear the two priests; and the main part of their conversation

was taken down by these spies. 'I had a note from Rokewood,' they heard Garnet say (Thomas Rokewood was a brother of Ambrose), 'and he telleth me Greenway is gone . . . I had another from Gerard, that he meaneth to go over to Father Persons . . . I think Mrs. Ann is in the town; if she be, I have writ a note, that my keeper may repair to her, and convey me anything unto her, who will let us hear from all our friends. I gave him an angel yesterday . . and he took it very well, with great thanks; and now and then at meals I make very much of him, and give him a cup of sack, and send his wife another, and that he taketh very kindly . . . You should do well now and then to give him a shilling, and sometimes send his wife somewhat . . . He did see me write to Mr. Rokewood.' The talk was long and curious; for the two Jesuits had not seen each other since they arrived in town. 'I must needs confess White Webbs,' said Garnet, who had at first denied being there; 'but I will answer it thus —that I was there, but knew nothing of the matter.' Oldcorne spoke in a lower tone, and the spies could not always catch his words. 'Mr. Attorney,' Garnet went on to say, 'told me very friendly, that he would make the best construction

of my examination to the King, and do me good. If I can satisfy the King, it will be well; but I think it not convenient to deny that we were at White Webbs. . . . They pressed me to be there in October last, which I will by no means confess; but I will tell them I was not there since Bartholomew's tide; neither will I tell them of my knowledge of any of the servants there, for they may examine and perhaps torture some of them, and make them yield to some confession . . . I am persuaded I shall wind myself out of this matter.' Poor fellow! A noise was now heard in the passage, for the spies had learnt enough for the day; and Garnet was heard to say in a whisper to Oldcorne, 'Hark you —hark you—Mr. Lieutenant! Make a hawking and spitting while I shut the door.'

Two days later, the keeper to whom Garnet had given his money and his wine, made a motion that the coast was clear; on which Garnet slid back the panel, and held a second confidential chat with Oldcorne. 'They charge me,' said Garnet, 'with some advice in the Queen's time for blowing up the Parliament House with powder . . . I told them at that time it was lawful, but wished them to save as many as they could

that were innocent.' Here was the evidence that Cecil and Northampton needed for his condemnation. 'They pressed me,' Garnet added, 'what noblemen I knew that have written any letters to Rome . . . . Well, I see they will justify my Lord Monteagle of all this matter.' What he said next was doubtful; for a cock in the Lieutenant's garden under his window gave a lusty crow. The spies reported that he mentioned the names of Lord Northumberland, Lord Rutland, and one other, though in what connexion he referred to these noblemen they could not tell.

The two Jesuits held a long debate as to how they should shape their confessions, not to differ in the main. Garnet complained that Oldcorne was rather lax, not standing to the bargain they had made while hiding at Hendlip. 'They went away last time unsatisfied,' said Garnet, speaking of Northampton and the other commissioners, 'and therefore we may expect the rack . . . . Mr. Attorney was about to write, but when he had written these lines he gave it over, and seemed to be angry, saying, "I had lost my credit, for *he* had undertaken for me to the King."' The spies reported that Garnet spoke much of a gentlewoman, and said that if he were

charged with her, he would excuse her coming with him; but how he was to do it, they could not plainly hear him say. They made a noise, as if some one were coming, on which Garnet asked Oldcorne to take a shovel and rattle the coals while he closed the dividing door.

These secret conferences, overheard by spies, continued for a week. In one of his brief confessions to his fellow-priest, Garnet admitted having drunk so much that he had twice been obliged to be put to bed. Oldcorne mentioned that he had heard from some one that their servants were being questioned; when Garnet replied that his own man, Little John, would never confess to anything against him. While he was using these words, this faithful servant, broken by his fear of the rack, was dying in another cell.

Up to the previous day Little John's strength had not been tried. Being asked in the ordinary way how he came to Hendlip, he refused to say; he knew neither Garnet nor Oldcorne; and though he had known Chambers for some years, he could not tell them whether he was Oldcorne's man or not. But on his thumbs being tied together, and his body being raised by a beam, he instantly gave up his master's name.

This clever architect could not bear the torture, and while his limbs were stretched he answered every question they chose to put. He had served Father Garnet from the date of the Essex rising. He had been with him often at White Webbs. He went with him down to Coughton, where he heard him say mass before the insurrection broke out; and afterwards to Hendlip Hall, where Garnet and Oldcorne dined and supped with Mr. and Mrs. Abington every day until the search began. These were the confessions of which Oldcorne had heard some hints; but Waad, who thought he could tell much more, told the lay Jesuit that his next examination should be taken on the rack.

The threat sufficed. Next day Little John complained of sickness, when his keeper lent him a chair to sit on and a knife to cut his meat. The broth for his dinner, he said, was cold; and feeling very faint, he begged the keeper to put it for a moment on the fire in an adjacent room. So soon as the man was gone he ripped himself open with his knife, and, gathering up the straw about his knees, sat still and bled until the keeper came. Seeing his prisoner covered with straw and dabbled with blood, the man ran off to the Lieutenant, whom he

found at table with his guests, and gave the alarm; on which Waad and the gentlemen who were dining with him rushed to the suicide's cell. The Jesuit was gone past hope, and the only speech they could draw from him was that he had killed himself in fear of the rack, lest in his weakness and his agony he might be tempted to betray the lives of men who had always been his friends.

A brave man, worthy of a nobler fate!

Ann Vaux was no less brave. In following Garnet to London and taking lodgings near the Tower, she knew the dangers into which she ran. About the time of her arrival, her house at White Webbs was searched, and her servant, James, was seized. Tied on the rack, this servant told the story of her life in Enfield Chase—her false names —her priestly guests—her dangerous visitors; yet for two or three weeks the Council allowed her to remain at large, and to correspond with her confessor in the Bloody tower. She sent in parcels of linen and boxes of marmalade. Garnet asked her for money to pay his fees, and he told her she must come to his keeper's mother for instructions how to act. If she came to the Lieutenant's garden, near his window, she could see him, though she must not try to speak. He told her

to get some of the Society's money if she could, as he wanted to buy beds 'for James, John, and Harry, who have been tortured.' This note—and much that followed it—was sent by a private hand; but the Lieutenant seems to have seen it before it passed the gate.

Ann Vaux, arrested and committed to the Tower, was sharply questioned as to her residence at White Webbs, and the gathering of conspirators beneath her roof. She answered boldly; confessing that Catesby, Winter, and Tresham had been her guests, and frequently at her table; that she had gone with Lady Digby to St. Winifred's Well; that she was at Coughton on the first of November last. But not one word could be drawn from her against the Jesuits. She would not say what priests were at the Well. She had heard no prayer, no mass, at Coughton. Told that Garnet had confessed the plot, she expressed her sorrow and surprise; as he had made to her many protests to the contrary. When they found her useless as a witness, they remembered her noble birth and set her free.

Nine days later Ann sent to the Tower a pair of spectacles, wrapped in a bit of paper, on which were written, in plain black ink, these harmless

words, 'I pray you prove whether these spectacles do fit your sight;' but when this piece of paper was held before a fire, the text of a letter, written in orange-juice, came out. She told the prisoner that Coke, at supper-time on Saturday night, had spoken of him. He had said, that Garnet, feigning to be sick, had gone to his chamber, where his keeper saw him take a letter from a box of marmalade, just then come in, and burn it. He had also said that Garnet had confessed to his knowledge of the powder, though he still denied any practice in it. She told him that the box and paper were from her hands. She was glad they reached him. The spectacles and scrap were from her; and if they came to him safely, then other of his friends would write, and steps could be taken to supply his room. She added, 'For myselt, I am forced to seek new friends, my old are wearied of me. I beseech you, for God's sake, advise me what course to take. My hope is you will continue your care of me, and commit me to some that will for your sake help me. To live without you is not life, but death. Now I see my loss, I am and ever will be yours; and so I humbly beseech you to account me. O that I might see you!'

On this letter being read by Coke, the writer was again arrested, and her house examined, when a heap of relics, altar stuff, and priestly trappings, were discovered. She said they belonged to her sister and herself. She confessed that Father Garnet had lived with her at White Webbs; that her cousin, Frank Tresham, had often come to see them; but she declared that the Jesuit had always counselled him to be patient in his griefs. The notes of this second examination were sent by Coke to Cecil.

As nothing could be learned from Ann Vaux, the Government were forced to make use of the conversations which had been overheard by their spies in the Bloody tower.

Oldcorne was carried into the Powder Plot Room, and charged by the Commissioners with having held a clandestine conversation with Garnet in the Bloody tower. Startled by the announcement, Oldcorne confessed that he had spoken with his friend through the door; and, being pressed by Coke, admitted details which were fatal to his comrade and himself. He was often at White Webbs, where he had met with Garnet, Gerard, and many more; but Garnet had told him in the Tower that he would never confess

to being at White Webbs. Garnet had also told him, in the Tower, that he had taken the lead in those prayers at Coughton, which in public he had strenuously denied.

Garnet was now brought in and questioned. Secret conference with Oldcorne! Never. He had not seen his fellow-prisoner; had never exchanged a word with him. When shown the paper signed by Oldcorne, he said it was all a lie; that Oldcorne might accuse him, but he would never accuse himself. On being threatened with the rack, however, he confessed to the main facts; and then he was sent to trial under a special commission, consisting of Sir Leonard Halliday, Lord Mayor, the four Catholic Earls to whom Cecil had read Monteagle's letter (Nottingham, Northampton, Suffolk, and Worcester), Sir John Popham, and some others. The trial took place in Westminster Hall; the King was present behind a curtain, and the Lady Arabella looked on the scene from a private box.

Oldcorne had been already tried, condemned, and executed.

Garnet's trial (March, 1606) was a form only, for he had been already tried in secret and condemned to die. The trial lasted some hours; Garnet de-

fended himself with subtilty and spirit; and Northampton made a long and scurrilous attack on the Jesuits in a speech, which he afterwards printed in London and explained away in Rome.

From the Tower gates, the Jesuit was carried to Ludgate Hill, in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, where a gallows had been built for him. A multitude of people came to see him suffer, and, like many a worse man than himself, he made a devout end. The injury which he had done to Ann Vaux was on his mind to the last, and he spoke some words on the scaffold to clear her fame. 'There is an honourable gentlewoman,' he said, not aloud to the people, but in a low, sad voice, to those about him, 'who hath been much wronged by report, for it is suspected and said, that I should be married to her, *or worse*. I protest the contrary. She is a virtuous gentlewoman; and for me a perfect virgin.' He prayed for the King and Queen. He said he had held out in denial, because he thought the Council had no proof against him. He now confessed his fault; and hoped that the Catholics would fare no worse for his sake. As he was saying his prayer, 'Maria Mater gratiæ, Maria Mater misericordiæ,' the cart was drawn from beneath his feet.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CATHOLIC LORDS.

WHILE Cecil and Northampton were employed in driving and seizing the priestly members of the Plot, they were not unmindful of those Catholic peers, who, from their name and faith, could not help being the most acceptable of Englishmen in the court of Spain. Such peers as Montagu, Mordaunt, Stourton, and Northumberland, were counted in their several ways, by foreign princes, most of all by Philip the Third, as the living force of the Catholic cause; the men by whom the country would be drawn at some future time into what they called the ancient family union of the Church. These peers might be out of favour; but men who had half the population of England at their back, could never be out of power.

Cecil and Northampton had to show the Duke de Lerma, that a foreign minister who counted on

these Catholic lords was counting on a bundle of broken reeds.

The facts which came out in the earliest questioning of Fawkes and Winter in the Tower, enabled them to take defensive measures against these lords without appearing to go beyond the stern necessities of the case. Fawkes had lived in the household of Lord Montagu, Kay in that of Lord Mordaunt. Stourton, who lived in Clerkenwell, was married to Frances Tresham, a sister of 'Cousin Frank.' Catesby was known to have warned Stourton and Mordaunt against coming to the House of Lords. Percy was not only a kinsman and servant of Northumberland, but was known to have supped with him at Sion on Monday night. Such facts, as they came out one by one, excited the public mind; but Cecil, in giving orders to restrain the four great Catholic peers, took every opportunity of hinting that he meant them well. At first, they were confined to their several houses; then, some of them were removed to the houses of aldermen and justices of the peace; but in less than eight weeks after the arrest of Guy Fawkes they were all committed to the Tower.

Anthony Maria Browne, second Viscount Mon-

tagu, of Cowdray in Sussex, was a youth of thirty-three, a master of many manors, colleges, and farms, and the husband of Lady Jane, a daughter of Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, the eminent poet and Lord High Treasurer of England. He lived in Montagu Close, the great Priory of St. Mary Overies, near London Bridge, a pile which had been given by Henry the Eighth to his grandsire, the first Lord Montagu of his line. The Priory was Church property, and when the Brownes became Catholic under Mary, it was hoped they would cease to hold an estate which belonged to God. In fact, the old Viscount had become strict in his principles; he had married Maud Dacre; he had called his grandson and heir 'Maria;' but he stuck to Montagu Close as firmly as though he had been the laxest heretic in the realm.

The case against Anthony Maria, Viscount Montagu, was ugly enough under any explanation, and he had the misfortune to give more than one explanation of the leading facts. The points which told most against him were:—that Guy Fawkes had been one of the servants near his person; that Catesby had given him some hint of what would occur when the King was

seated on his throne; and that he had proposed to be absent from his place in Parliament on the opening day.

To the first point he answered, that Fawkes was placed by his grandfather in his household when he married; that he was then a boy under nineteen; and that Fawkes was in his service only about four months. But he could not say that he had never seen him since that time. On pressure, he confessed that Fawkes, after the first Viscount's death, had slept in his house and served at his table. The explanation was, that his steward, one Spencer, a kinsman of 'the miserable fellow,' had given him a few days' lodging in Montagu Close, and while he was staying there, had turned his service to account. All this took place twelve years ago, and since that time he had scarcely ever seen or thought of him.

To the second point he answered, that he met with Catesby in the Strand by accident on the Tuesday before All Saints' Day, as he was going to the Savoy to dine; that the conspirator gave him no warning to absent himself from Parliament; that their speech was only general, as to the cause of his being absent in the country. But the very next day, he corrected the date on

which these dangerous speeches had been held in the Strand into the Tuesday fortnight before All Saints' Day; a date which he could fix, he said, from the fact that he was dining in the Savoy with his aunt, Lady Southampton.

To the third point he answered, that he proposed to be absent from London on the opening day by the King's good leave, and not otherwise; a leave which he hoped to procure through the Earl of Dorset, his father-in-law. If this leave could not be obtained for him, he meant to be in his place. The old Viscountess Montagu (poor Maud Dacre) knew about it; for on telling her of his plan for going down into the country, she had begged him not to go, unless he could first get leave of absence from Parliament, as the hard riding would be too much for his health.

From Sir Thomas Bennet's house he was carried to the Tower; but for the sake of Lady Jane, if not for his own, the Council dealt with his inconsistencies in a tender spirit. Brought before the Star Chamber, he was condemned to a fine of four thousand pounds and imprisonment during his Majesty's pleasure. In the end he compounded for his fine, and lay in the Tower about forty weeks.

Henry Mordaunt, fourth Baron Mordaunt of Drayton Manor in county Northants, and of Turvey in county Beds, was descended on his mother's side from the old Catholic family of Darcy, one of whose members had forfeited his honours by the Pilgrimage of Grace. Mordaunt was a close friend of Catesby, but being a Catholic of the old English school, he could not be entrusted with the secrets of his plot. He was a weak and pliant creature, whom the haughty Catesby had to manage and despise. Some one had proposed to swear him. 'Not for a church full of diamonds!' cried the man who knew him best. If Mordaunt were told the secret, even on the Primer, Catesby was of opinion that he could not keep it. Easy and yielding, he was used, like the two Littletons, by that mastering spirit, who induced him to permit his servants to be employed in raising men, under cover of a design to fight in the Archduke's cause. Two Irish fellows, named O'Ferrall, who had been tempted to enlist, gave evidence against Mordaunt's man. More than one of the prisoners confessed that Catesby had given some hints to his friend; and Mordaunt had made excuses for not being present with his peers, on the ground that his conscience

would not allow him to attend the King at church.

Turvey, his ancient seat in Beds, was a notorious nest of Jesuits. Kay had lived in his house, and Kay's wife was the teacher of his children. All these things were against him. Brought before the Star Chamber, Mordaunt was sentenced to a heavy fine, with imprisonment during the King's pleasure; and after six months of rather sharp privation in the Tower, he was liberated on conditions which left him a broken man. In succeeding reigns the Mordaunts rose again; chiefly in the person of Henry's grandson, the meteoric Earl of Peterborough; but for twenty years to come his utmost care was needed to preserve in his family that lordship of Turvey which had been their own since the reign of Henry the First.

Edward Stourton, ninth Baron Stourton of Stourton, in county Wilts, was the second son of that wretched Charles, Lord Stourton, who had been hung, in a silken cord on account of his quality, for the murder of his neighbours, the two Hargils, father and son. Edward, then a boy, was said, like his elder brother John, to have been privy to the crime; but the lads were spared on

account of their youth; and after eighteen years had passed over the public memory, the two brothers were restored in blood, in order that John might sit, as one of the old Catholic peers, on the bench which was to condemn Mary, Queen of Scots, to death. This John, eighth Lord Mordaunt, died without issue; and Edward, his partner in suspicion, came into the honours of his race.

A dark and gloomy fanatic, with hands not free from blood, and weighted with the curse of his father's shame, this Edward, ninth Lord Stourton, had lived a lonely life, the companion and the victim of monks and priests. Lady Stourton was Frances, a daughter of Sir Thomas Tresham, and therefore a sister of 'Cousin Frank.' Their London house was in Clerkenwell; a part of the famous priory of that place; for the Stourtons, like the Brownes, had no objection to receive church lands.

Brought before the Star Chamber, Stourton, who could neither deny his intimacy with Catesby and 'Cousin Frank,' nor explain to the court his reason for absenting himself on the opening day, was sentenced to a thousand pounds fine and imprisonment during pleasure in the Tower. This fine was compounded, and the prisoner released; compounded, not paid; for two years after his

release from the Tower, the fine was returned in a draft of outstanding public debts. What was due to private persons had been paid to the uttermost coin.

Compounding for fines was a curious and immoral traffic, and being conducted with the utmost secrecy was understood by few. Lord Stourton happened to be one of those few; his wife being a Tresham, and one of a family which had been driven by their misfortunes into studying the mysteries of this immoral trade.

When Cousin Frank went out with Essex into the Strand, he fell into so much danger that every one expected him to share the fate of Cuffe and Lea. But the Treshams were rich, and some great ladies in the court were poor. A communication was made to Sir Thomas, in a roundabout way, on behalf of a young lady who might be able to help his son. This young lady, the daughter of no less a person than Lord Howard of Walden, Constable of the Tower (afterwards Earl of Suffolk; the same who went into the vault and jested about the coal and wood), was represented as being willing to plead for Frank, on certain trusts being executed in her favour by the master of Rushton Hall. Catharine Howard was then a child, too young to

speak with her Majesty on any subject more serious than a toy; but her mother, Lady Howard, the sharpest intriguer living, had arranged with her lover, Sir Robert Cecil, that this girl should some day be the wife of his eldest son; and therefore it seemed right in the Secretary's eyes that Catharine should be provided with a dowry out of traitors' lands. Sir Thomas, knowing that the life of his son was in their power, consented to lodge with a third party, not to be named in the writings, certain bonds of large amount, on the understanding that these bonds were to be handed over to certain 'honourable persons,' when a 'matter' not set forth in words was performed, and to be returned to Sir Thomas in case that 'matter' was not performed. How much money was paid to the young lady by Sir Thomas remains a secret; one of the bonds was drawn for twenty-one hundred pounds, and several were for a thousand pounds a-piece. The bribe was so large, that Sir Thomas always said the payment crippled him for life.

Through some such channel as Lady Suffolk's daughter, Stourton compounded for his fine.

But the ruin of these three barons was of less

importance to Cecil and Northampton than that of the great northern Earl, the friend of Raleigh, the mainspring of the war party, the future hope of the Catholics, and the most powerful personage living beyond the Trent.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HARRY PERCY.

HARRY PERCY, ninth earl and twenty-first baron of his line, had won his spurs of knighthood in the Low-Country war and in the Armada fight; in which, though a good Catholic, he had fought with heroic fire against the King of Spain. But his hope of achieving a great career in arms had been quenched by the many and unseemly quarrels into which his violence of temper led him.

Even when the flush of youth was gone, he had no control over his tongue and pen, and at thirty he behaved like an overgrown boy in a public school. For two years he had fought in the lines of Ostend with credit, when his mutinous passions entrapped him into an indecent broil with his commander, the illustrious Vere, whom he wished to call out and fight. He quarrelled with his comrades, and separated from his Countess. This lady, a sister of Lord Essex and of Lady

Rich, was of a temper heated and unruly like his own; and when they bickered in their golden halls, Northumberland rode away from her, engaged a mistress to live with him, in open shame, and hired a lodging for her near the court in order to provoke his wife.

Apart from an infirmity which he shared with his ancestor and namesake, Harry Hotspur, Percy was a gallant soldier and a princely friend. Raleigh respected him as a companion in arms. Neither Pembroke nor Southampton rivalled him in his sympathy for science and the liberal arts. Peele and Heriot were his constant companions. Spenser sent him a sonnet, and a copy of the Faery Queen. Peele composed for him his poem called 'The Honour of the Garter;' and Heriot owed to his bounty that leisure for investigation which led to his discoveries in solar and stellar science. It was said in Percy's praise, that no scholar ever turned disheartened from his door. Himself a student of art and nature, he toyed with every subject in its turn; with numbers, with music, with the starry heavens, with alchemy, with the elixir of life. Bacon looked to him as a patron of the new learning: 'Your great capacity and love towards studies and contemplations of a higher and nobler

nature than popular (a nature rare in this world, and in a person of your lordship's quality almost singular), is to me,' wrote Bacon, 'a great and chief motive to draw my affection and admiration towards you.' In person, he was the soul of honour; and if he could only have curbed his petulant tongue, he would have been one of the most perfect paladins in the English court.

The name, the valour, and the possessions of Percy, had pointed him out as Lord Protector, in case the kingdom should require such an officer on the Queen's demise. The whole north country would have rallied to his flag; and the known wishes of the great Earl, as to the coming in of James, had done more to make his entry pleasant than those of any other man.

The King, too well aware of his service, had hardly crossed the border before he called him to his Council by a special act. Yet the lines were drawn between Cecil and Percy from the opening day of the new reign; and every slight that could be made to gall and wound a spirit only too quick to see offence was put on Percy by his smiling and respectful adversary. Percy, who had thought of finding great employments under James, was sore at heart; and being sore at

heart, was certain to be loud of tongue. He talked to Bethune. He inspired Watson with hope. Even if he had been careful of his words, he could not have failed to be the subject of conversation in taverns like the Hart's Horn, in slums like Butcher Row; and he was far from careful of his words. The circle at White Webbs made many inquiries about him. Once, indeed, they thought of making him their General, in place of Stanley; but his fanatical kinsman, who had come to think of godliness as a thing of fasting, whip-cord, and a horse-hair shirt, reported that the Earl had given up religion for science and the worldly arts. When Raleigh was arrested, Percy went down to Windsor Castle to defend his chief; and, but for Cecil's fear of trying too much at once, he would have been wrecked in the Arabella Plot instead of in the Powder Plot.

So great a man could not be readily set aside, and Percy was associated with the court in many offices of grace. He was made Captain of the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners; he was chosen as witness when Prince Charles was created Duke of York; he bore the basin when Princess Mary was christened. The Countess of Northumberland was one of Mary's godmothers; the King's

cousin, Lady Arabella, being the other. Sion House, which Percy had previously rented from the crown, was now settled on him by grant.

Still, he had little actual power; and after Raleigh's trial and reprieve at Winchester, he retired in weariness of spirit from a world, in which he could find no peace, and tried to console himself with the intellectual delights of study, building, gardening, and the like. The Lord of Wressil in Yorkshire, of Petworth in Sussex, of Alnwick in Northumberland, of thirty other manors, parks, and castles, he had scope enough for the indulgence of princely tastes. The Earl spent much of his time at Sion, where he transformed the dull monastic garden into a laughing lea of flowers; among which he played with his four little ones—Algernon and Henry, Dorothy and Lucy; boys and girls who were, each and all to live remarkable lives: Algernon as tenth Earl of Northumberland, one of the heroes of the Civil War; Henry as Lord Percy of Alnwick, the favourite cavalier of Queen Henrietta Maria; Dorothy as Countess of Leicester, and mother of Algernon Sydney; Lucy as Countess of Carlisle, the friend of Strafford and of Pym, and the subject of a thousand rapturous songs.

Northumberland was clever, popular, and rich. Some envied his reputation; many coveted his lands. Even while he was training his plants and sporting with his children on the lawns at Sion, his fate was drawing him towards that dungeon which had been the dwelling of so many of his race.

Most of the old fighting Percies had been prisoners in the Tower. More than one had been murdered in its chambers; and many of them had passed through the Bye-ward gate to the block on Tower Hill. The Beauchamp tower and the Bloody tower were dark with the traditions of his house; and now another tower on the Ballium wall was waiting to receive her guest, and grow into sudden fame as the prison of Percy the Wizard Earl.

Incapable of prudence, Northumberland had been more than usually imprudent in his dealings with his kinsman, Thomas Percy, the conspirator; for he had not only given him a place in the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, but had suffered him to enter on his duties without taking the customary oaths. There he was wrong, and wrong beyond excuse. Percy knew that his kinsman disliked the King; he ought to have known that he was a convert and a tool of the

Jesuits. Such a man was unfit for a post so near the King, and, even if he had been fit for such a post, he ought never to have been admitted without the usual forms. The great sum of money which Thomas Percy had brought to London was the Earl's property, and Northumberland seems to have been careless in exacting from him his vouchers and returns of rent. But the circumstance of darkest note was that supper on Monday night, when Fawkes rode down to report the official searching of the vault. Fawkes had no sooner confessed to having found his master at Sion, than the Earl was commanded by the Council to keep his house. In vain he pleaded in defence his secluded ways, his absence from court, his devotion to his books, his plants, his children, and the innocent pleasures of a country life. Taken from Sion, he was given in custody to Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, and remained at Lambeth Palace for twenty days, when he was carried down to the Tower, in which he lay five months without being either accused or heard.

At the end of June (1606) he was brought before the Star Chamber, and accused (1) of wishing to put himself at the head of the Papists, and to

procure their toleration: (2) of admitting Thomas Percy to be a Gentleman Pensioner without taking the oaths. Four additional articles were drawn, but they were only variations of these two. The sentence was, that the Earl of Northumberland should be fined in thirty thousand pounds; that he should be deposed from the Council, and removed from his Captaincy of the Pensioners; that he should cease to be Lord-Lieutenant of any shire; that he should be kept a prisoner in the Tower for life. He raised a passionate cry against the justice of such a sentence; but the lords were deaf to his wrongs, and Sir William Waad conducted him once again to that gloomy fortress in which his father had been shot to death.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WIZARD EARL.

A SPACIOUS and secluded house was found for Percy in the Martin tower, on the north-east angle of the Ballium wall; a house which had been occupied before his time by Lord Rochfort and other gentlemen connected with Anne Boleyn; which was occupied after his time by Archbishop Sancroft and his fellow-sufferers in the church. The vaults of this mural tower, which are exceedingly strong, were used during many reigns as the royal jewel-house; and here occurred the desperate attempt of Colonel Blood to steal the crown. Here also occurred the comicalities of the Tower ghost. But the ghost which haunts the stairs and terraces around the Martin tower is that of Harry Percy, who lay in it for sixteen years, and whose quaint garb, unusual studies, and strange companionship, caused him to be known as 'The Wizard Earl.'

The terrace on the wall connecting his lodging with the Brick tower and the Constable's tower is called the Earl of Northumberland's Walk. Heriot's sun-dial, fixed by that famous astronomer, is still to be seen on the southern face of the Martin tower.

Percy's wild youth continued into his middle age, and his character was a puzzle to the wisest men. Nobody could dispute his courage, his attainments, his munificence; though every one could see that his temper was bad, his learning fantastic, his conduct suspicious. He was a student, a swordsman, a sorcerer; a man given equally to cards, to science, and to pleasure; as prompt with his blade as he was saucy with his tongue. But the scornful habit, which had wrought him so much evil in his younger time, soon softened when he came to reside in the Martin tower. Injustice acted on his mind in an unusual way; for he who could hardly bear a prosperous fortune like a man of sense, bore the miseries of a harsh and undeserved imprisonment with noble pride. The wife who could not live under his roof at Sion and Petworth, came to share his cell in the Martin tower; where her pretty children became the spoiled darlings, not of

their father only, but of every person in the Tower.

The Countess was but too familiar with her new and dismal home—the Tower. Stout Sir John Perrot, the father of her first husband, died in one of its vaults. The dust of her brother Robert, Earl of Essex, lay in the dark little church under Develin tower. Many of her brother's old friends and rivals—Raleigh, Cobham, Grey—were daily seen in the garden and on the wall. Her second husband was now a prisoner; not to come forth, though happily she could not know so much, until long after she had worn out her life with care and watching.

No man then lying in the Tower was kept a prisoner on more flimsy pretexts than the Earl. His real offence was being too great; his pretended crime was being a kinsman of Thomas Percy. He had no more to do with the Gunpowder Plot than with the Arabella Plot; but having a hot temper and a vast estate, his fellows of the Council-board were anxious to stop his tongue and to get his land. Such a fine as thirty thousand pounds, he said, was never laid before on any subject in any realm. It was a king's ransom; equal to 150,000*l.* in our present coin.

When Percy urged that such a sum could not be wrung from a private estate, the King was advised to take his affairs in hand and try his skill in collecting rents. It was bad advice; bad in law, and bad in business; for the Star-chamber sentence had left the Earl's property intact; and the crown had no legal right to levy the fine by seizure and distress. But what was law to men like Cecil, Suffolk, and Northampton, the three great peers who now ruled the King? The manors were seized, the farms were let on lease, and the rents were collected by agents for the crown. In vain the Earl protested. 'This method is not used,' he wrote; 'my lands are spoiled, my houses ruinated, my suits in law prejudiced, my officers imprisoned, my debts unsatisfied.' All this was true. The King's receivers grew fat; but the King himself got little of the spoil. These receivers were allowed two shillings in every pound of rent, and as they paid their receipts into the county courts only once a-year, they had the use of his money for many months. To get the place of a receiver of Northumberland's rents was to get a good thing. 'In all this provision for them,' cried the Earl, 'I find not a thought of one penny for either wife, child, or

myself. There wants nothing but strewing the land with salt.'

The Countess came to court, and threw herself at James's feet, as Lady Raleigh was then doing daily, though with gentler passion and livelier hope; praying that his Majesty would not suffer the bread to be taken from her children's mouths. James told her, with far more kindness than his wont, that he would never hurt her and her children. She was his old friend's sister, dear to his heart for that old friend's sake. She must rely upon him. Lady Northumberland flew to the Martin tower with these gracious words; and Percy, who thought his time had come, drew up a statement and petition to the King; in which he asked no more than leave to go home to his house in Petworth. 'Hum,' said James, in answer; 'I must take my own time.'

While waiting on the King's leisure, which was long in coming, Percy made the best of his crowded rooms. He hired from Lord Carew, Master of the Ordnance, the adjoining house —the Brick tower—as an occasional residence for his son Algernon, in whose young face he loved to recall the heroes of his line. Lady Dorothy was often with him. Lady Lucy came

and went, like a summer bird, bringing gleams of light from the outer world into his cell. In that cell he made a collection of books, globes, astrolabes; and drew to himself a society of learned and ingenious men. Thomas Heriot came to live with him in the Martin tower, and in the midst of his many embarrassments Percy never allowed the poor student's pension to go unpaid. Walter Warner and Robert Hues were also his constant visitors; and these three men of science were known in the Tower wards as the Earl of Northumberland's Magi. John Dee, the astrologer, came also to the Martin tower; where he met with a host of scholars, such as Thomas Allen, Nathaniel Torperley, and Nicholas Hill. To all these servants of science the Wizard Earl was a bountiful patron and enduring friend.

One comfort in a confinement which was long without being always strict, lay in the occasional freedom of his intercourse with Raleigh, in whose experiments of the still-house he felt a warm and mystical interest; hoping that the phials which held the Great Cordial would one day hold the Elixir of Life.

All his wife's appeals to James were fruitless. Solomon told the Countess he should like

her husband to prove that Thomas Percy had *not* given him notice of the plot. 'Your Majesty, that is so great a scholar,' answered Northumberland, with biting sarcasm, 'cannot but know how impossible it is to prove a negative.'

At length, some change came over his affairs at court, in a way which he had neither expected nor desired. As his children grew up, they fell into love with other young people of their age and rank. Of course, they fell into love with persons whom their father scorned as unworthy of alliance with the Percy blood. Algernon was kneeling at the feet of Lady Anne Cecil, grandchild of Lady Suffolk; but on a match between the youth and maid being proposed to the recluse in the Martin tower, the Earl proudly exclaimed against it, crying, 'The blood of Percy would not mix with the blood of Cecil, if you poured them into a dish.' In time, though not with Percy's consent and blessing, that match of Algernon with Lady Anne took place.

The love-affairs of his daughter Lucy crossed him even more than those of his son. This girl, whose incomparable beauty as a woman was the theme of a dozen poets, from Waller to Carew, and the snare of eminent men from Strafford to Pym,

was fluttering into a first young love with the favourite, James Hay, afterwards Earl of Carlisle. The Wizard raved and stormed at her folly. What could a Percy have to do with upstart curs like Hay? Believing in his heart that Hay was following Lady Lucy for her money—as he heard, right truly, that Lady Suffolk was courting Algernon for his money—he sent the Scotch favourite word, that if she married any man without his leave she should never get a penny from his purse. But Hay, in love with a pair of bright eyes, and never troubling himself to count the cost of his love, ran off with this message to the girl, caught her up in his arms, obtained her consent, and married her in a trice. The King, who was present at their nuptials, which took place at court, with a thousand gaieties and fooleries—eating the wine posset, throwing the left shoe, and running at the ring—made a bridal present to Lady Lucy Hay of a promise for her father's enlargement from the Tower.

But Lady Lucy found it an easier task to get a pardon from the King than to induce her father to accept it. Percy would not owe his liberty to Hay; and when the order for his release was read to him, the venerable Wizard, swearing he would

Hay, went back to his books, his globes, and his magi in the Martin tower. That tower had come to be his home. Lady Northumberland was dead; his son was married; his health was failing; and he cared no longer for the glory and greatness of the world. His comrade Heriot was in correspondence with Kepler, on things of higher moment than the intrigues of a court; on the laws of vision; on the cause of rainbows; on the sun-spots, which he noticed before they had been seen by Galileo; on the satellites of Jupiter, which he was the first in England, perhaps in Europe, to observe. He was busy with the theory of numbers, to which Percy had given a good deal of his time. In the face of such studies, what to the Wizard Earl were the rivalries of Buckingham and Hay?

The doors were open; but he would not go. The Lieutenant informed him that he had orders to use him with honour, and to announce his departure with saluting guns. Lord Percy and Lady Lucy, whom he received in sorrow, as children who had lowered his family pride, persuaded him that he ought to go down to Bath for the benefit of his health. But he was long in making up his mind to go. At length he allowed himself

to be put into a coach, and carried away from his nightly lodging and his daily walk, under a joyous salute of guns. But the old Adam was not dead in his veins. On reaching his house, he heard that the new Duke of Buckingham was driving about town in a coach with six horses. Six horses! Who was this Villiers, that he should outbrave a Percy in magnificence? With a cry of contempt, the Earl commanded his servants never to drive him through London with less than eight horses to his coach.

On his return from Bath, he lived mainly at Petworth, with Heriot constantly at his side; laying up in the library of that baronial seat the letters and papers which in a new generation added so much to the glory of English science.

CHAPTER XXV.

A REAL ARABELLA PLOT.

At length the young lady, in whose name so many gallant men had been accused of treason and committed to the Tower, was herself an offender against the King, and a prisoner in the dungeon of her race.

For Lady Arabella Stuart had the presumption to fall in love and marry her lover, without the King's consent; an act of disobedience in one so near the throne to bring her within the penalties of that law which had been passed to punish her starless grandmother, Margaret Douglas, the sister of James the Fourth.

No passage in the story of our royal house has a more pathetic comedy than the tale of Arabella Stuart's love for her young and graceless kinsman, William Seymour; of her secret marriage to that cold and calculating paladin; of her sudden arrest

and long imprisonment; of her romantic efforts to escape from London; of her final separation from her lord; and the train of evils which that escape and separation brought upon the adoring wife.

This pair of lovers were descended from Henry the Seventh, and had the turbulent Tudor blood careering in their veins. Seymour was a grandson of Catharine Grey, whose grandmother was Mary Tudor, Queen of France; Arabella was a granddaughter of Margaret Douglas, whose mother, Margaret Tudor, was the Queen of Scots. Each of these personages stood too near the throne for safety; and many of the keenest critics of the Court imagined that the young lady would be one day Queen. 'Some time,' Elizabeth had been heard to say, when speaking with the French ambassador's wife, 'this child will be lady-mistress here, even as I am.'

When James the First came in, his cousin, a fair young woman of twenty-eight summers, with round blue eyes, soft oval face, arched brows, and ripples of curling hair, was the Rosalind of a dull court; tender in spirit, young in wit, lightsome in manner, full of prank and jest. Without being much of a beauty, she had not the less been thought,

in her younger time, a most engaging and attractive girl. A good talker, a fine musician, she was the delight of every house in which she lived. As a princess of the royal blood, she had been pursued by adorers. Princes had sought her from north and south; the King of Poland, the Duke of Parma; nay, Henri the Great, had dreamed of her blue eyes and ripples of curling hair. 'I should not refuse the Princess Arabella of England,' he remarked to Sully, 'if she were once declared heiress presumptive.' The stern necessities of the Crown had doomed this royal lady to live an unwedded life.

Arabella had always been an object of speculation in foreign courts. She was a favourite in Rome and Madrid; and her religious views were thought to be rather Catholic in their bent. Philip regarded her as a friend of Spain.

This tendency on the part of foreign kings to busy themselves with her affairs, was one chief cause of her being watched with unsleeping care by Cecil; and, now that Cecil was growing faint, by Suffolk and Northampton, with increasing fear. Lady Suffolk was anxious to have no rival in Philip's cabinet, which a royal princess, married and having issue, could not fail to be, whether

she wished it to be so or not. A king's cousin, growing old in her single state, might be a person of the court, but she would not be a public power.

Enriched by the gold of Spain, Lady Suffolk had nearly as strong an interest as the King himself in compelling the Lady Arabella to live and die in her unwedded bliss.

When Arabella had passed her thirty-fifth year, the King, who had come to regard her settlement as a standing jest, was rude enough to tell her she was now free to marry anybody who would have her. She took him at his word. Rosalind had seen Orlando in the person of her young kinsman, William; a youth of twenty-three; a man of books and theorems; cold, sedate, and clever; given over-much to pondering on his birth, his poverty, and his family wrongs. For the Seymours, grandsons of Catharine Grey, sister and heiress of Queen Jane, inherited all the rights of that popular idol; so that after the King's issue, and the Lady Arabella, William and his brother Edward, Lord Beauchamp, were the nearest claimants to the crown.

That Seymour could be moved by noble passion his after life in the Civil War, through which,

as Marquis of Hertford, he fought on the side of Charles the First, abundantly made known. His offer to be put to death instead of the King, has covered his name with such romantic light and colour, that the harsh and calculating lover of Arabella Stuart appears in the story like a different man. But Seymour's childhood had been spent in a bitter school. His family, one of the proudest in England, was a wreck. His father was a child of the Tower. His grandmother, Lady Catharine, died under the brand of an illegal union. Nearly all his kinsmen for a hundred years had fallen to the axe. No man in the realm, not even of the Percy and the Howard families, could claim so large a share in the noble dust of St. Peter's Church. Under the flags of that darksome pile lay the ashes of his kindred by the male and by the female lines; of Edward, Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector of England; of Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley, Lord High Admiral; of Henry, Duke of Suffolk; of Lord Thomas Grey; of the Nine-days' Queen; to all of whom he and his brother Edward were immediate heirs. His grandfather, the aged Earl of Hertford, had been ruined by a monstrous fine. His father had been tainted in his birth,

and been compelled to fight in the courts of law for more than thirty years, in order to establish his mother's fame.

That father had passed away, worn out by rage and sorrow, leaving his sons to the care of a feeble old man, whose spirit had been broken more than forty years.

William, the younger son, with his fortunes all to seek, could not foresee that his brother would die without issue and leave him heir. He was poor, and wanted to be rich; obscure, and wanted to be great. He looked around him in the world, and saw no way in which a younger son could rise so quickly as by marrying a royal bride.

When the court was at Woodstock, Seymour was at Magdalen College, and in the leafy groves of that royal park Rosalind and Orlando rambled unobserved, their ages and their kinship covering them from the malice of prying eyes and whispering tongues. The lady thought she was free to love, and Seymour was sedate beyond the warrant of his years. At thirty-six a lively woman, who has lived among poets and adorers, is pretty sure to be quick in feeling and susceptible to fire. When Arabella rambled in the park of Woodstock, she

was in the mood for love; and the youth of twenty-three summers, seeing where the woman of thirty-six was weak, found his way into her room, threw himself at her feet, and made her an offer of his heart. Such words had not been heard by her of late. The poets praised her beauty, the courtiers extolled her wit; but no one dared to speak to her of love, since it had been always said at court that James would never allow his cousin to enjoy the consolations of a wedded life. She bent her round blue eyes upon him, and raised the enamoured youth into her arms.

Informed by spies of what was going on in Lady Arabella's room, Northampton caused her gentleman-usher and her lady-in-waiting to be seized and committed close prisoners (March, 1610); while he placed the lady herself in charge of Lord Knyvet, the man who had arrested Fawkes in Parliament Place. Nothing could be proved against her, for nothing illegal had as yet been done; and in some respects the rumours which had got abroad came back to her in grace. The King bethought him of her state; a woman debarred the privilege of her sex; a royal princess, with a scant provision and a load of debts! He sent her a box of plate, he gave her a

thousand marks to pay her people, and he settled on her a pension of sixteen hundred pounds.

But she was now in love, and money would not stay the beatings of her heart. On Candlemas-day—seven weeks after her first arrest—she received William Seymour in her private room at court, and pledged him her troth in a way which, in her own opinion, made her his lawful wife.

When the news of what they had done came out, and Seymour was called before the Council to answer for the outrage of betrothing himself to the King's cousin without the King's consent, he treated the affair with cool and provoking scorn. He was poor, he said, and wanted means. He was a younger brother, he said, and wanted rank. He knew that the lady he loved was great, and from her style of living he thought she must be rich. As a young man, having his way in the world to make, he felt justified in trying to win her. But he did not mean to offend the King. He fancied that she had her sovereign's leave to marry; if his Majesty raised objections, he would proceed no farther in the match. No contract had been made between them, such as binds betrothed persons to each other; nor had either

the lady or himself ever dreamed of proceeding to betrothal without the King's consent.

The King was pleased with words so frank and loyal; and on Seymour promising to forego his suit, the scandal died away. When quizzed about her youthful adorer, the lady took the jest with a laughing grace, and seemed to be more intent on masques than marriage. On the creation of Henry, as Prince of Wales, a gallant masque was offered by the Queen, in which Arabella, dressed in shells and corals, played a nymph of the Trent. She was an admirable artist, and the court was giddy with her praise. The young Prince loved her; the Queen was always at her side; and, but for Northampton and Lady Suffolk, the King himself would hardly have treated her like a brute. So far as money could soothe her grief she had no reason to cry out, for, in addition to his previous gifts, the King made over to her a license to sell wines and usquebaugh in Ireland for a term of one-and-twenty years—a privilege worth not less than a hundred thousand pounds.

The young dissembler held his tongue.

Three or four months slipped by without much trouble to the pair, when Seymour, who

was vainly expecting the King to yield, took his sharp cousin, Edward Rodney, into his confidence; telling him of his secret contract, and of his resolution to marry the King's cousin, cost her what it might. He made Rodney swear to keep his counsel, and to help him by his suit and service when the time of action should arrive.

A month after Lady Arabella had been tickling the court gossips by her garb of shells and corals, Seymour called on his cousin Rodney, to tell him of his plans and to seek his help. The two young men dropped down to Greenwich, where they found a poor priest, John Blague, who was willing to perform the rite; and early next day (July 9, 1610) the young fellows went up into the lady's chamber in the palace, where the nuptial knot was tied by Blague, in the presence of her two gentlemen, Hugh Crompton and Edward Reeves, beyond the power of kings and councils to untie.

Here then, at length, a genuine Arabella Plot had risen to perplex the court. When the secret came out the King was furious with the Seymours, feeling that he had been cozened and deceived, as well as outraged and defied. The aged Earl, who had ruined himself by marrying Catharine Grey, was thought by James to have urged this new and

more dangerous suit, so as to bring the family of Seymour one step nearer to the throne than they already stood. But the abject protests of the broken man appeased him. Orders were given to arrest the conspirators, of whom Rodney alone escaped pursuit and capture. Blague, the priest who had married them for a fee, was committed to the Gate-house in Westminster; Crompton and Reeves, the gentlemen who stood by as witnesses, were sent to the Marshalsea in Southwark. The bride was given in custody to Sir Thomas Parry, who lodged her in a fine house on the Thames near Vauxhall; while Seymour was placed in the house of Sir William Waad, Lieutenant of the Tower, until fitting apartments could be got ready for a man of his rank and taste.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WILLIAM SEYMOUR.

THE bride and bridegroom, parted in the first hours of their honeymoon, took the blow in their several ways. Seymour lost his temper, and his partner broke her heart.

Seymour's chief trouble was the want of money, of which he had none, and his wife not much. Blue eyes would not pay his weekly bills, and Seymour's weekly bills were likely to be large. He wrote to his grandfather for an allowance; and, with the King's consent, Lord Hertford consented to allow him fifty pounds a quarter for his maintenance in the Tower. The rooms assigned to Seymour for his future home, were the handsome chambers in St. Thomas' tower, in front of Raleigh's Walk; but Seymour thought these chambers were cold and bare, needing much arras, plate, and furniture to give them a cheery look; so that while Rosalind was crying in Parry's fine house, refusing

to be comforted in her grief, Orlando was wrangling with Waad about hangings and cups, about presses and stools. Tapestries were bought for him, and the chambers opening on the Thames were brightened with serge, with silver, and with books. To Waad's surprise, however, this prince with a thousand wants had not a single pistole in his pouch to pay for the things he ordered; and much to the Lieutenant's wonder, when he came to think of it in after times, this husband of a royal princess got into his debt. Sir William was not a man to pay for other people; and once he set his teeth, even in the tradesfolk's presence, against his haughty and exacting guest. Seymour, who wanted new tapestries for his sitting-room, induced Waad to order five pieces for him from Jenning the upholsterer, at ten pounds a-piece. One of these pieces Seymour cut across, so as to make it fit his fire-place; by which he destroyed it as an article of furniture for use in any other room. Waad, who had pledged himself thus far, declared that he would give his name no more.

Seymour was not nice in the art of helping himself to what he needed. The princess, now his wife, had a villa of her own at Hackney, and to this villa he sent for such things as he could not

get from Waad; kitchen-stuff, linen, silver trenchers, candlesticks, drinking-cups; and when his rooms had been duly brightened up (on credit), he took jaunty leave of the Lieutenant's house, and went to live in his chambers over Traitors' gate.

Those comforts of the flesh which Seymour prized so much had no great hold upon his wife. The bride was not closely kept; she was served by her own people; she had a garden to walk in; and no restraint was put on her use of books and pens. Her servants could come and go; her table was well supplied; she was in correspondence with her friends. But she felt no comfort in her freedom, since her soul was in the chamber on the wharf, where her husband, as she dreamt, was pining out his soul for love. She wrote to him in tender and moving tones, to which the young bridegroom answered her not a word. In fact, he saw that his marriage was a mistake of means. His wife was not rich; nor could she help him to become great. He had vexed the King to please her; and—she was thirty-seven years old.

When Arabella heard from him at all, it was through Smith, a servant, who told her that he had been ill. Then Rosalind snatched a pen

and wrote, with her delicate banter, to her bridegroom in the Tower:

'I am exceeding sorry to hear you have not been well. I pray you let me know truly how you do, and what was the cause of it, for I am not satisfied with the reason Smith gives for it. If it be a cold I will impute it to some sympathy betwixt us, having myself gotten a swollen cheek at the same time with a cold. For God's sake let not your grief of mind work upon your body. . . . In what state soever you are, it sufficeth me you are mine. . . . You see when I am troubled, I trouble you too with tedious kindness; for so I think you will account so long a letter, yourself not having written to me for this good while so much as how you do. But, sweet sir, I speak not this to trouble you with writing but when you please. Be well, and I shall account myself happy in being your faithful, loving wife.'

Seymour was too busy for such tender and unprofitable humour; the winter passed and the summer came again without much writing to his wife. He was looking to himself, to his present comforts in the Tower, to his future rank and place at the royal court. He was writing to the lords of the Council, praying to be restored in grace,

asserting that his health was ruined, and begging to be allowed the full liberties of his prison.

All the love, and nearly all the daring, were on the lady's side. Growing bolder as the days went by, she got into a barge, dropped down the river, and paid a visit to her husband, with whom she may have spoken through his grated window on the wharf. Such facts were sure to become known at court; this daring visit was reported at Whitehall; when the King gave orders that a dozen counties should be put between his romantic cousin and his impudent prisoner in the Tower.

Arabella was to be placed in charge of William James, Bishop of Durham, with orders to repair forthwith into the north, and there await his Majesty's pleasure; while Seymour was to be watched in St. Thomas' tower with a sharper eye.

And now came a strife between Solomon's craft and Rosalind's wit; a comedy in its course of deception and surprise; a tragedy in its conclusion of insanity and death.

Early in June (1611) the Court was fluttered by a message from Sir William Monson, dated from a tavern at Blackwall. This tough old sailor, taking boat for Billingsgate, on his own affairs, was told by his watermen that a swift barge, having some

of Seymour's friends on board, had dropped down the river on the previous night. The barge had been lying off St. Katherine's Wharf. A boat was in attendance at the Tower stairs; a bundle of clothes had been thrown into this boat; at nightfall a man in a black wig and a carter's dress had come alongside; a parley had taken place between the carter and a young gentleman in the boat; the carter had gone away, and the young gentleman had told the watermen to pull for the barge. Some of the men engaged in the business were known to be Seymour's kinsfolk. Who could say whether Seymour himself might not have been that carter in the black wig?

Monson, a friend of Lady Suffolk, a partizan of the house of Howard, suspected that an escape was being attempted from the Tower, the defeat of which would be likely to make his fortune. Instead, therefore, of landing at Billingsgate, as he had meant to do, he bade his men pull lustily for Blackwall, where he jumped on shore, ran into the river-side tavern, and learned from the man who kept it that a young gentleman, or one who by his dress and figure wished to pass for a young gentleman, had come on the previous evening to his house on horseback, in company with a

lady of middle age, and after staying in a private room for two or three hours had at last taken oars for Gravesend. He also learned that Lady Grey, a daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, had come down to Blackwall, from which she was pulled across to Greenwich. This Lady Grey was a cousin of Lady Arabella. Every word he caught was full of mischief. Pressing his host still further, he learned, that late on the previous evening, two gentlemen, dressed in the same sort of clothes, from rosette to plume, had come to Blackwall, one of them by land, the second by water; that they seemed to be looking for some one who was not there; that the youth who came by water had mounted a horse and ridden away, while the one who came by land had taken oars and put off from the wharf, as though he were following the young gentleman and the lady of middle age.

While Monson was extracting this news from his landlord, men from a vessel in the river stepped on shore. They had come up the Thames that day, and in reply to the Admiral's questions, they could tell him that a French barque, then lying in Leigh Roads, had taken a strange party on board and sailed at daybreak on the course for Calais. Sure

that an escape was being made, and also pretty sure that Seymour was on board the French barque, he saw what a golden chance was thrown into his path. Of late he had been falling back. A reign of peace was not a reign in which men of his trade could thrive; and Monson had been vainly striving to obtain at court the prizes he could no longer obtain at sea. If Seymour had broken prison, the man who captured and brought him back would do a striking service, not only to the Howards, but to the King.

Familiar with the winds and currents of the Straits, he knew that the French barque, sailing from Leigh Roads at dawn, could not have passed the Foreland. The wind was high, and the water rough. The barque would then be rolling in the chops beyond Margate Sands. If the wind should keep in the same quarter, that barque would not be able to make the port of Calais before set of sun.

Quick in action as though he were on his quarter-deck, the brisk old sailor took his course. Throwing a few men into an oyster-boat, he pushed them down the Thames. Mounting a good rider, he sent off a message to the admiral commanding in the Downs. Writing a letter to Cecil, he informed the Secretary of his news; and then pulled

over to Greenwich, where he asked for the use of a royal ship.

His high rank in the navy made his wish in these matters a command; so that in less than an hour after his coming to the inn-door at Blackwall, he had opened the chase of his unknown fugitive by water and by land.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ESCAPE.

ARABELLA had done her part, as women always do, with singular and successful art. Before she was carried away from Lambeth she had procured the liberation of her servant, Hugh Crompton, from the Marshalsea. Among her many merits, this royal lady had the grace of making all her people love her. By nature soft and kind, she made companions of her attendants, from whom she could not bear to part, still less to see them suffer on her account. When Reeves and Crompton were in prison, she sent to the Marshalsea almost every day to learn how they were doing, and wrote most pressing letters for them to the Council and to the Queen. She seemed to suffer more pain for her people than for herself.

The Council was hard of heart, for the Howard party was anxious that the King's cousin

should never more regain her old ascendancy at court; but when plague broke out in the Marshalsea, her prayers became so urgent that they could not be denied; and when she was ordered into the north country, Crompton, as the man most used to her ways, was suffered to share what was understood by Lady Suffolk as her banishment from the English court.

Before going north, the lady made one last appeal to the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench and the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. In marrying, as every woman was free to do, she conceived that she had done no wrong; but if others thought so, she demanded to be tried for her offence, and punished according to the law. 'If your lordships,' she wrote, 'may not, or will not, of yourselves grant me the ordinary relief of a distressed subject, then I beseech you to become humble intercessors to his Majesty that I may receive such benefit of justice as both his Majesty by his oath (those of his blood not excepted) hath promised, and the laws of this realm afford to all others.' She added, with equal modesty and dignity, 'And though, unfortunate woman that I am, I should obtain neither, yet I beseech your lordships retain me in your good opinion, and

judge me charitably, till I be proved to have committed any offence, either against God or his Majesty, deserving so long restraint or separation from my lawful husband.'

The Lord Chief Justices to whom she wrote were Sir Thomas Fleming and Sir Edward Coke, courtiers and creatures of the Howards; her prayer remained unheard; and warrants were issued by the Council for Sir Thomas Parry to bring her 'person' to Whitehall.

She protested against this seizure, and had to be removed by force.

Rightly or wrongly, the lady conceived the idea that she, a free woman of the blood royal, was being treated with lawless violence by a faction in her cousin's court, against whom it would be fair in her to use whatever stratagems her wit could devise.

The courtiers, reading her prayers and protests, and fearing to place her at the Council table, where some sudden burst of feeling might touch the King and cause him to change their plans, requested the Bishop of Durham to go in person to Vauxhall, and there receive her into charge. The lady was in no mood to submit in silence to this change. The Bishop produced his letters.

She refused to stir. With tender art, for the Bishop was a godly man, he tried to soothe her rage, by telling her the story of patient saints, and of prisoners far less happy than herself. She wept, she raved, she fainted on the floor. At length they picked her up, placed her in a coach, and carried her to the Thames, and so through the town to Highgate Hill. Scant preparation had been made for her reception on the road. A cold March wind was blowing in her teeth. The inns were mean and full of people, and her escort was instructed to hurry her along. She had to be carried in a litter, in which she fainted thrice before they reached the Hill. Moundford, her physician, gave her cordials to restore her strength, but late in the afternoon he began to fear she would not live, and in a fainting state she was put to bed. A rider was sent back to court, where Suffolk, suspecting that her sickness was put on, sent Sir James Croft, a court physician, to see her. Sir James reported that her sickness was not feigned. Still force was tried to make her go. Sergeant Mynors, one of her escort, lifted her out of bed into the coach, and bore her to Barnet, where Moundford declared that she could not travel, and to carry her farther would

be murder. Mynors himself was frightened when he saw her lying on the floor, her face like death, and her tunic stained with blood.

The good Bishop wrote from Barnet to the lords, describing her sickness, and asking for orders what to do. The doctors and parsons who came to see her told but one story. She was unfit to travel; and when the King perceived that he could not drive her on without the risk of killing her on the road, he gave an order for her to rest a month and then go forward towards the north.

A cottage was hired for her from Thomas Conyers, at East Barnet, near Hampstead Heath, in the fresh air of which her spirits suddenly revived. She kept her counsel well, so that only her trusty maid, and her faithful Crompton, knew how she really was in health. The Bishop went north to prepare her chamber, leaving her in the charge of Croft. Moundford rode backward and forward between the Heath and Charing Cross, where the Council pressed him to compel her to go on. He begged for another month, but the lords refused her another day. As Croft and Moundford seemed to them too yielding, they sent for Mynors, who told them the lady was not fit to travel; but they cut the keeper short by saying

it was the King's absolute will that she should go at once to Durham, even if she rode no more than a mile a-day.

She wrote to the King and Queen. She made a friend of Mrs. Adams, the wife of a clergyman who came to see her. She wrote to her aunt Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, who espoused her cause, to the peril of her freedom and estate. Her uncle Shrewsbury was a member of the Council; but his brain was too weak for influence on a board at which Cecil and Northampton sat. In her distress of mind for her niece, Lady Shrewsbury appealed to the new favourite, Robert Carr, now Viscount Rochester; but the young minion of royal grace was in love—in most disloyal love—with Suffolk's beautiful daughter, Lady Essex, and therefore was a slave to that powerful peer. Taking his cue from Northampton, the Nestor of his lady's house, Carr answered the Countess of Shrewsbury that he could not solicit the King in a matter which was unfit for her to ask and for the King to grant. Northampton wrote an account of this 'faithful and sound refusal' to the King.

But Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, was not a woman to yield at once. She knew how near the

throne her kinswoman stood, and she hoped that Seymour and Arabella would leave a son to inherit their claim, and perhaps to wear the crown. By fair means, if it might be, by foul means, if it must be, she resolved that the young man and his wife should come together in some country beyond the reach of James.

Sending for Hugh Crompton, she told him of her hopes, her means, and her designs. She hoped to unite the husband to his wife. She had plenty of money; and she fancied that, on spending gold enough, she could buy the means for their escape into France. Crompton listened to her speech. With wit and money, anything might be done; servants corrupted, disguises bought, confederates paid, and vessels hired for flight. Crompton went to East Barnet, and told his mistress all that Lady Shrewsbury had opened her mind to say. The lady leapt to her offer, and with ready wit suggested the particulars of a plan for their joint escape into France; she from her keepers at Conyers' house, and Seymour from his lodgings in the Tower. Her servant, seeing the way laid out, engaged to prepare disguises, to arrange for horses, and to hire a skipper in the Thames. They only wanted money, and money the Countess

undertook to find. Great sums—not less than twenty thousand pounds in all—were quickly raised and poured into Arabella's lap, 'to pay her debts.' Jewels were bought; a cloak and hat, a rapier, and a pair of cavalier's boots, were carried in secret to Conyers' house. In her private room, the faithful Hugh instructed his lady how to wear her hat and sword.

Money was sent to Seymour in the Tower, with details of a plan for his own escape. Young Rodney entered with all his soul into Crompton's scheme. Two suits of clothes, exactly alike from rosette to plume, were made; for the cousins were of an age and size to match; and these two suits were to be used on the day of flight. A second disguise was got for Seymour, in the shape of a carter's frock and whip. Batten, his barber, made him a great black wig. One Monsieur Corvé, a French skipper, was hired to lie in the Leigh Roads, and wait for certain parties, who would give him a pass-word, and come on board his barque.

Croft now told his patient she must resume her journey towards the north, where the Bishop of Durham was waiting to receive her into his charge. Every one about Conyers' cottage pitied her, even those who had to answer for her; and

on the physician's plea, a second month was given her to recruit her strength. That month was May; a month of rare delight on the breezy Hampstead heights. She seemed to be winning back her health. At once playful and meek, she lulled suspicion; and Croft, believing that his patient wisdom had prevailed over her fretful spirit, advised the Council that she was now resigned to the King. When, late in May, he pressed her, in the King's name, to resume her journey towards the north, she named Monday, the third of June, as the day on which she would be ready to set forth.

About four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, dressing herself in cloak and hat, drawing on a pair of cavalier's boots, slinging a sword by her side, and putting her jewels into her pocket, Rosalind came out of Conyers' cottage with Mrs. Bradshawe, the daughter of a gentleman of East Barnet, followed by William Markham, one of the gentlemen of her suite. A walk of half-an-hour brought them to a lonely inn, where Crompton was waiting with horses ready saddled for their flight. Sick with hope and fear, poor Rosalind gave her hand to a groom, who helped her to mount; and as the party pricked away towards London, this lad

turned round to his fellow-groom and said, 'Poor young gentleman! he will hardly reach London alive.' A quick ride brought the blood into her cheek; but on reaching the inn by the river at Blackwall, where she expected to find her husband safe and well, she almost fainted from her horse. It was six o'clock, and Seymour was not come. Boats were hired for Woolwich; the luggage was put on board; the men got ready to start; but Rosalind would not stir from the Blackwall inn until Orlando came. A precious hour was lost; the village clock struck seven. Mrs. Bradshawe urged her to go on board, as the pursuers would be soon upon their track. The oarsmen grew impatient, for night was coming on. Still she would not stir from the little parlour of the water-side inn. What to her was liberty unless her husband was at her side? A few minutes more might give him his only chance.

When the church clock chimed eight, the watermen told her she must either go at once or wait until another day. They could hardly now make Woolwich Reach before dark, and they did not care to be out on the Thames all night. With a heavy heart she stepped on board, and the boat pushed off from the Blackwall stair.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PURSUIT.

LADY ARABELLA and Mrs. Bradshawe were in the leading boat; Crompton and Markham, her gentlemen-in-waiting, in the second. They had with them a heap of diamonds, pearls, and rubies, and a sum of three thousand pounds in gold. Five minutes after they left Blackwall stair the sun went down; but they had still an hour of light; and when they were fairly in the stream she asked the men to carry her past Woolwich, and put her on shore at Gravesend, which they were willing enough to do for a purse of gold. At the second port she found a skipper, who agreed, for a high fee, to take her down the river to Leigh Roads, where Corvé's barque was to take them all on board. In the dark summer night they passed the barque without seeing her, and in Leigh Roads found a ship at anchor, which they hailed. The master of this ship, John Bright,

bound for Berwick, refused Arabella's offer of a large sum of money to carry her into France. Bright told her that a ship was lying in the Roads about two miles up the river, which ship she fancied must be Captain Corvé's barque. Turning back in her search she hailed the strange vessel; and finding her to be French, she made herself known to Corvé by the pass, and in a few seconds her party was taken up on board.

The wind was cross. For four days past it had been blowing east by south; the sea was running high, and, with the best of fortune, the barque could hardly have passed the Foreland and got her tack. But Corvé made no haste; for his royal passenger begged him to hang below the Nore, in the hope of picking up Seymour from some craft. Their plans were so well arranged, that she was sure her husband had left the Tower. Some accident had spoiled their meeting at the Blackwall tavern; but she felt no doubt that he was somewhere tossing in his boat at sea. She lost some hours in reaching the narrows, and long before they got into open water in front of Calais, their happy chance was gone.

A swift war-ship, the Adventure, had been

sent from the Downs on Monson's order, to sweep the Straits. The Adventure appeared in sight. The French coast was near, and the barque threw out her sails; but a boat was lowered from the Adventure to give chase. The princess wept; the captain fought his best; but after thirteen shots had been fired into him, Corvé struck his flag and gave up his freight.

Seymour had taken care of himself. By the help of Rodney, he procured his black wig and his yellow frock. Feigning sickness, he kept his room in the Water gate. The Lieutenant had no conception that Seymour was such a deep and wily youth; and even when the bird had flown away from his cage, he was chiefly vexed at finding that the fellow had cheated him of his perquisites by secretly sending away from his lodgings the best of Arabella's plate!

On the Saturday night, when everything was ready at East Barnet for the lady's flight, Rodney went to a house near St. Catharine's hospital, kept by a woman with whom he had formerly lodged, and hired a room, on the pretence that he felt himself a little unwell and wanted a change of air. He sent his man to this woman's house with a great bundle of clothes, which

were laid in his room. Early on Sunday morning the man came again, with a fresh bundle, and asked whether his master had yet arrived. Two strange persons called during the day, one of them a female, who stayed in the house until all the stuff brought in by Rodney's man was carried to a boat at St. Catharine's wharf.

All that day, poor Seymour was thought to be lying ill in bed. Just at sun-down, a cart drove up to the Water gate, when Seymour, leaping out of bed, put on his carter's frock and wig, snatched up a whip, stepped out into the street, and drove the horses along Water Lane through the Bye-ward gate.

Rodney was waiting for him with a horse and boat near Tower Stair. Seymour mounted the horse and rode away, while Rodney stepped on board and pulled for Blackwall; where the two men met again about nine o'clock. Seymour had changed his dress, and the landlord of the inn observed that the cousins were dressed alike from head to foot. Seymour soon learnt that his wife had come and gone. The young men parted company; Rodney riding away to baffle pursuit; while his friend and cousin dropped down to

Leigh. The French barque having sailed, Seymour made no effort to follow his wife, but finding a collier beating about the narrows, he bribed the master to take him on board and land him in Ostend.

When the crew from the Adventure leaped on board Corvé's barque, Arabella came forward, made known her rank, and yielded herself a prisoner to the King. They asked her where Seymour was; to which she answered, smiling, that she had not seen him, and could not tell them; but she hoped he had got across into France; and said that her joy at his escape consoled her for her own mishap.

Passengers and crew being taken on board the Adventure, and brought into the Downs, Sir William Monson despatched a messenger with his news to court. The King was cross, and Northampton inflamed his passions; but Cecil, an advocate always for the middle term, prevailed with James to adopt a more moderate course than Northampton would have had him take. Northampton tried to make the King believe that Arabella's flight was a deep political plot, and he drew a fanciful picture of a series 'of plots that were to follow' her escape

into France. Cecil laughed this nonsense out of court; yet the proceedings taken against the suspected persons were sharp enough. Even before Monson had brought his prisoners up the Thames, a number of men and women had been committed to the various jails; the Countess of Shrewsbury to the Tower, Sir James Croft to the Fleet, Mr. Adams and Dr. Moundford to the Gate-house, the barber Batten to the Keep. When the captives arrived in town, the King gave orders that his fugitive cousin should be lodged in the Tower, and the apartments chosen for her were the chambers occupied by Margaret Douglas, the common grandmother of Arabella and the King. William Markham was sent to the Marshalsea, Hugh Crompton to the Fleet. Corvé was lodged in Newgate, then much used as a sailors' prison. Edward Rodney, seized near London, was put in the Gate-house, questioned by Northampton, and committed to the Tower. Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury, and Edward, Earl of Hertford, were restrained to their several homes.

The proceedings lasted long, and wore out many lives. One by one the minor agents in the escape either died in prison or gained their

liberty by telling what they knew. Croft, who knew nothing, was discharged from the Fleet; while Dr. Moundford and Mr. Adam, who knew little more than Croft, were liberated from the Gate-house. As nothing could be learned from Rodney, he was suffered to go abroad, where he joined his cousin Seymour at the court of France.

Crompton and Markham, the companions of Arabella's flight, were brought from the Fleet and Marshalsea to the Tower, and pressed by questions in the torture-chamber, until they told some part of what they knew.

When niece and aunt were brought before the lords and questioned as to the escape, Arabella was gentle and yielding, while her aunt was haughty in manner and hot in speech. Why, asked the Countess of Shrewsbury, was she brought before that secret and unjust tribunal? Northampton bade her answer the questions put to her. She would not answer. She would not be tried in private. She appealed to the law. If they had evidence against her, let them produce it in open court. Northampton stormed upon her. Was that the way to deal with the King's council? Still prouder and more scornful, she de-

manded to know whether that was the way to treat a lady of her rank?

Lady Shrewsbury bound herself by a great oath never to reveal the particulars of her niece's flight.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DEAD IN THE TOWER.

When Lady Arabella was taken on board the French barque, she had three thousand pounds in gold, and a great wealth of rings and bracelets in her trunks and on her person. This money, and these jewels, the property of Lady Shrewsbury, had been seized by the King, and the money had been used for paying the cost of Arabella's capture. But a heap of gold and a case of jewels were the smallest parts of Lady Shrewsbury's loss. This wealth was Arabella's force; and the raising of so large a sum of money was proof of Lady Shrewsbury's share in her flight. But neither niece nor aunt could be drawn into confessing each other's guilt; and after many of Northampton's attempts to snare them had been foiled, the two ladies were sent back to the care of Sir William Waad.

Rich enough to buy herself every indulgence, Lady Shrewsbury procured a suite of rooms in the royal quarter, consisting of the Queen's old lodgings; three or four chambers in which she could live and walk about; but worn by time, and bare of hangings, furniture, and wainscots; the windows being broken, the doors unhung, the ceilings open to the sky. Not a single servant of her own was suffered to be with her. Gilbert, her husband, wrote to Cecil, who obtained for her some relaxation of the rules. But the lady would not help her friends; her stomach was said to be too high for a private person, even of her exalted birth. A servant was allowed, as an especial grace, to wait upon her. The ceiling of her room was mended, so as to keep out wind and rain. But the Countess was tormented in her prison by Northampton, who came to the Tower in the interest of his new tool and dupe, Sir Robert Carr, now hungering for escheats and fines. Carr was eager to get Sherborne Castle from Raleigh; a part of the thirty thousand pounds from Percy; a case of Arabella's diamonds; a lump of Lady Shrewsbury's vast estate; and the hoary pander to this young man's passions came down to see the prisoners, one by one, to pry into

their ways of life, and find some pretext for proceedings yet more harsh. Every one in the Tower had cause to regret his coming. Raleigh and Percy were confined to their cells. Lady Shrewsbury was insulted in her apartments; and the Lady Arabella suffered from the incivilities of Waad, an officer only too anxious to please his patrons at the court.

The darkening crimes and breaking strength of that bad old man were hurrying him to an end; but whether that end would be a felon's dungeon or a councillor's grave, the nimblest wit in London could not tell.

Lady Shrewsbury, saucy and silent with the lords, was brought before a Select Committee of the Privy Council, at York House, the residence of Ellesmere, to answer for not answering; an offence which Northampton said amounted to a contempt of the King. They told her that Crompton had confessed to all she had done in the marriage and escape of her niece, and they wished her to supply information on certain points. She would not speak to these points. She pleaded her vow—she pleaded her peerage. If she were charged with an offence she claimed to be tried by her peers, according to the law, and in

open court, not by a Committee of the Council, sitting in a private room.

Four of the judges, consulted on her case, subscribed to a view of the actual law, which, on a sentence being passed in the Star Chamber, would have laid her open to a fine of twenty thousand pounds, and imprisonment during the King's pleasure. That a verdict could be gained against her in the Star Chamber, if promoted by the Council, who could doubt? Yet the Countess was not frightened into speech. Sent back to the Tower, she lived on, year by year, in her old defiant mood, until her enemy Northampton died and the 'Friends of Spain' were broken and dispersed.

Seymour amused himself in Brussels and Paris, wrote abject letters to King James, and squabbled with Waad about the plate and hangings he had left behind him in St. Thomas's tower. In less than six months he forgot his wife, and almost forgot his debts. Waad wrote to Cecil, that the flown bird had left nothing behind him of his own, since the best things in his rooms had been either fetched from the Lady Arabella's house or taken from the Lieutenant's store. A few things he had bought from tradesmen, but for these things he had never paid.

In the chamber which her grandmother Margaret had occupied in the Tower, poor Rosalind, having lost her all for love, remained a prisoner to her cousin five years. Some of her letters, written from the Tower to the King, have been preserved; tender and winsome letters, full of sad humour and wife-like grace. Her pleas were simple. When the King had told her to marry whom she pleased, she thought herself free. She allowed her heart to become engaged. Her lover pressed her, and she plighted him her troth. That act of plighting made them, in her conscience, man and wife. Before she learned that the King objected to her match, the deed was done. If she had given offence, it was because she had been driven to choose between the law of God and the law of man. 'Most humbly I beseech your Majesty,' she wrote, 'to consider in what miserable state I should have been, if I had taken any other course; for my own conscience witnessing before God that I was then the wife of him that now I am, I could never have matched with any other man.' She signed her letters 'A. S.,' which luckily answered to either Arabella Stuart or Arabella Seymour. But the King was dead to her sorrow. Trying him on every side; by turns gay and

cheerful, sad and submissive; she appealed to his pity, to his pride, to his affection; and she tried him on every side in vain. When the 'Queen of Hearts' was married to the Palsgraf of the Rhine, poor Rosalind hoped that her cousin's heart would open to her woes. 'Mercy, mercy! for God's sake, mercy!' was the burthen of her daily prayer. The King was deaf.

In her lonely chamber she plied her needle on a canvas which she meant to send as a remembrance to the King; a dainty piece of labour, to have touched a kinsman's heart. But James would not accept her present. Then she fell sick, and pined in her room, and wandered in her thoughts.

The rules under which she lived in the Lieutenant's house were harsh, and even in her days of sickness they were not relaxed. Waad knew his masters, and guessed their minds. No news, he felt assured, could reach Northampton's ear so welcome as that of Arabella's death; and hence, when his functions gave him power to trouble his unpardoned captive, he pressed against her with all his weight. He refused to let her servants wait upon her. He compelled her to eat the ordinary prison fare. She asked for posset,

and for clothes befitting a sick room and a lady who kept her bed; but she asked for these indulgences in vain. In her search for help, she turned to her bitterest foe at court, and in a plaintive letter told Northampton of her misery in the Tower. 'I have been sick,' she wrote, 'even unto the death; from which it hath pleased God miraculously to deliver me; but find myself so weak, by reason I have wanted those ordinary helps whereby most others in my case, be they never so poor, are preserved alive—at least for charity.' She had little hope from Northampton, and her note was more a menace than a prayer. In words direct enough, she told him that the privations under which she lay in prison would be not only 'the certain,' but 'the apparent' cause of her death. She warned him, that if either he, or his nephew Suffolk, had 'possessed the King with such opinions of her as should cause her to be restrained until help came too late,' she knew her course. 'I dare die,' she added, 'and oppress others with my ruin, if there be no other way.'

The strain was now too great for her feeble strength to bear. Her tender musings passed into fierce convulsions; and when her doctors had

chased the agony away, her mind was found to be a wreck. Rosalind was become Ophelia!

Days, months went by in hopeless waste of love and life. She lost all sense of passing things, and prattled in her madness like a child. The Lieutenancy of the Tower was changed; a more unscrupulous tool of Lord Northampton coming to rule over her; but she took no heed of what was going on. Some friends she found, in the Tower and beyond the Tower; men who pitied her, and would have given their lives to help her; but these were not the great ones of the earth. Palmer, a divine of the English church, and Crompton, her faithful servant, put their heads together and, in the summer of 1614, in the third year of her imprisonment, contrived a plan for her escape. It was a wild design, which led to nothing, except their own arrest and imprisonment, a letter of congratulation from Northampton to Carr, and a resolution on the part of James to guard her better in the time to come.

The rumours of her proposed escape were useful to Northampton in drawing people's eyes and thoughts away from a frightful drama which had just been closed in the Bloody tower.

She lived a year after Crompton's attempt had

failed; tenderly drooping day by day; always gentle, sometimes playful, never morose; now plying her needle through the flowers, now touching her well-worn lute, and humming her evening song, until at length the weary woman fell asleep.

In the dead hours of an autumn night her ashes were taken from the Tower, and laid in that Abbey which was the tomb of all her race; laid beside all that remained of her grandmother, Margaret Douglas, and her great-aunt, Mary Queen of Scots; with neither line nor stone to mark the spot in which she sleeps.

Seymour lived abroad, keeping his eye on events, and hoping to come back, which he was now convinced he could never do while his consort was alive. He never wrote to her, never sent her token of his love. He heard that she was sick, he heard that she was crazed; but Paris was gay; and nothing in her fortunes seemed to touch his young and calculating heart. When he heard that she was gone, he threw himself upon James's mercy, implored his pardon, and obtained permission to return. Attaching himself to Charles, he became that prince's councillor and friend; fighting at his side through the Civil War, and making

at its close that theatrical offer of being put to death for his King, which is the best-remembered of his feats. But to make things safe whichever side should win, he took a second wife from the popular side; marrying Lady Frances Devereux, sister of Lord Essex, the great Parliamentary general. Seymour kept his head and his estate, and when Charles the Second came back to London he received the reward of his many virtues in his elevation to the rank of Duke.

It is not known that Seymour ever paid for the hangings supplied by Jenning at ten pounds a-piece for his comfort in St. Thomas' tower.

Yet before the royal lady passed into her rest in the great Abbey, she heard that the hoary and wicked Earl, who had wrought her so much evil, was no more; that in his later time he was a loathsome object in all men's eyes; and that he was gone to his grave suspected of a hideous crime, for which, on proof and judgment given against him, he would probably have been hung.

CHAPTER XXX.

LADY FRANCES HOWARD.

THE last and latest of the many tools by which Northampton worked his will at court was the beauty of his nephew's daughter, Lady Frances, the young wife of his ally, Robert Earl of Essex.

In the long line of our female criminals there is hardly one more fascinating and more odious than Lady Frances Howard, the daughter of Lady Suffolk. When she was yet a child of thirteen springs, she appeared at court in one of the parts of Ben Jonson's Masque of Hymen. A daughter of the house of Howard, she was chosen by Cecil and Northampton, as the first victim in a series of matches, by means of which they hoped to fuse into one great party four rival houses; the other victims of their policy being her elder sister, Lady Elizabeth, and her tiny sister, Lady Catharine. These girls were given in marriage by plotting greybeards to two boys and one old

man; Lady Frances to Robert Earl of Essex, Lady Catharine to William Lord Cranborne; boys no bigger than themselves; whom they could neither love nor hate in that tender age; and Lady Elizabeth to William, Lord Knollys of Greys, a kinsman of the great Queen. The prize of this union of the four great houses of Cecil, Howard, Devereux, and Knollys, was to be the control of king, court, and government for a dozen years.

The King was thought to have made the match between Earl Robert and Lady Frances, and the wedding came off in a scene which was gay with all the gaiety of a court. The King and Queen were present. James, who gave away the bride, and heard Montagu bless the children, ran with them from the chapel to the masque, where they were dazed by the lights and company, by the ripple of Jonson's verse, by the surprise of Inigo Jones's sceneries, by the masquers' white plumes, and the ladies' ropes of pearl. When the feast was eaten and the romps were danced, the boy and girl, now man and wife according to the Church, were sent away to school. Lord Essex went abroad with his tutor, while his child-like bride went home to her mother's house.

Reared in the court of France, living much in Huguenot homes, the Earl grew up into a grave and religious youth; while the Countess, his bride, being trained under her mother's eye, grew up into a woman unspeakably venal and impure. A youth of parts and figure; soft in his ways, especially with the gentler sex; quick with fire and manhood; proud of his great name; inclined like the old warriors of his house, to cleave his way, not by his wit but by his sword; Earl Robert grew up into a perfect knight, armed at all points with the courtier's grace, no less than with the soldier's art. During the five years which he spent abroad, he does not seem to have thought very much of that festive scene at the English court, and of that fair young face which had filled the galleries of Whitehall with light; and when he returned to London, after a long absence, to claim his wife, now grown into a lovely woman, he heard with equal surprise and pity that the fair young girl whom he had kissed and promised to love was thought by some of his family to have been led by her kinsmen into unwife-like ways.

The girl was cursed with the rarest gifts of person. Tall and lithe, with oval face, small pouting lips, straight nose, and masses of shining

hair, she would have taken captive every heart without the aid of her brilliant eyes. If those said sooth who knew her best, those eyes were fired with a wondrous and wicked glow. They set the poets raving, drove the painters to despair, and even when they shone in eclogues only, furnished critics with the theory of what Johnson calls the poetic propagation of light.

Living with her mother Lady Suffolk, with her sister Lady Knollys, both of whom made wreck of their repute, she learned, while yet a child, to see the value of such gifts. A husband far away, of whom she heard as poring over strange books, as crossing swords with unknown sparks, was not the man on whom her fancy loved to dwell. Though young and noble, she heard that he was grave and proud, averse to courts, contemptuous of pomp and show, a soldier more like Grey than a cavalier like Carr. Unhappily for the girl, no friend was at her side in those perilous years who could have shown her a better way. Her mother had for many years been lost to all sense of shame. Of her elder sister, now the wife of a man old enough to be her grandfather, it is enough to say that she was (afterwards) that Countess of Banbury whose married life has been the subject of judicial

inquiry ever since she died. From her father, and from the old man who was more to her than father, she had little more than venal counsels to expect.

During the dozen years of the new reign, the Howards had driven a thriving trade in honours and estates, though the ducal coronet of their house had not yet been won.

Henry, the Nestor of his family, was Baron Marnhill, Earl of Northampton, Constable of Dover Castle, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Privy Seal, High Steward of Oxford, Knight of the Garter, a Commissioner for the Office of Earl Marshal, and Keeper of Greenwich Park. Among manors and castles which he had begged from James, was Castle Rising in Norfolk, the lordship of Ash in Suffolk, the manor of Buckland in Dorset, the manor of Clare in Salop, Wark Castle and the manor of Tyndale in Northumberland, the Chase of Baggeridge and White's-wood in Stafford. Besides his official salaries, he got a personal pension of two hundred pounds a-year for life; one hundred pounds a-year of the surrendered pension of Lady Walsingham; and a royalty on all the starch either made in England or imported from abroad. He had built a great palace at Charing Cross, which he called Northampton House, and a

second great palace in the country which he called Audley End.

Thomas, his nephew and favourite, was Baron Howard of Walden, Earl of Suffolk, and Lord Chamberlain, with nearly as many pensions and perquisites as his uncle.

Since Cecil's death, no single courtier had been able to stand his ground against the Howards, whose high connexions and unscrupulous talents had made them every year more dangerous to the King. James loved them little, but he feared them much. He liked their supple knees and slimy tongues, but trembled when he thought of their riches, their experience, their ambition, and their greed. One thing about them gave him comfort—they were hated by his people; so that he had little doubt, if ever he should have to turn against them, that he could do so with the nation at his back. Northampton asked for the White Staff, the wand then borne by the Lord High Treasurer; and the King, not daring to give him that staff, on account of his religion and his unpopularity, put the Treasury in commission for six months. Then commenced a new series of intrigues, through which the hoary and wasting Earl expected to win his place. He threw out

lures and hints, and played a most curious game of give-and-take. He favoured the reduction of Northumberland's fine, in order to catch the support of Lady Lucy's lover; and actively pursued his young crony, Lord Vaux, the nephew of Ann and Helen, until that pupil of Garnet was condemned to the loss of his estate and to imprisonment in the Fleet for life. He gratified the London mob by hanging Father Richards and Father Sahagun, two priests who returned to England without license; at the same time, taking some pains to soften the surprise in Rome by sending his nephew Arundel to weep at the foot of the gallows on which the priests were hung. So well was his game played out, that the world began to talk of Northampton's 'Protestant zeal,' and for this outbreak of English virtue he was rewarded by the Dons of Cambridge, who added to his many offices and honours that of Chancellor of the University—a step which brought him sensibly nearer to the Staff.

Northampton, gazing on Lady Essex's lustrous eyes, began to dream of an alliance with the royal house; and this old man, who should have been her guide and stay in the path of honour, taught the poor child how to beam on the young

prince, and blessed his stars when he observed how the warm boy flushed and trembled beneath her gaze. But Henry, though he liked to toy with the siren, never dreamt of asking her to be his wife. Too soon and easily he clipped her chains. Once, when she dropped her glove at his feet, a courtier drew his eye to the sign of favour; but he passed it by, saying, 'No; it has been stretched by another.'

The tale of Prince Henry and Lady Essex having been locked in a room may not be true; but Lady Suffolk and Lord Northampton had the sort of fame in the city which left them open to suspicion of the vilest acts. In that dozen years, during which they reigned at court, the tone of life in the upper ranks had undergone a change. To those who had seen the stately and decent court of Gloriana, that of her successor on the throne appeared like a cock-pit and a bear-garden. Fulk Greville, in a ripe old age, which was certainly not penitential and severe, described for the amusement of after times the vices of great lords and ladies as he saw them; a picture of courtly manners, to be mated only in the annals of some Cæsar in ancient Rome, some Regent in modern France. Lady Suffolk was no solitary queen of

vice, nor was Northampton the only broker in his country's shame. All ranks seemed rotten; the finest ladies to wear their prices, so to speak, upon their sleeves. A royal closet, unclean with the litter and language of a kennel; galleries besieged by gamesters, pensioners and jades; ante-chambers choked by sorcerers, poisoners, and pimps; a garden walked by bravoes, ready for any service, however foul and dark, that stood beyond the hangman's reach; with a bald and febrile man of middle age presiding over the dice and drink, the sale and cozenage; scenes which were varied and disturbed by Lake's reports, by Montagu's divinity, and by Archie's broad grins:—such was the court in which the hoary and dying Northampton was seeking to obtain the Staff.

Having failed in his hope of catching the Prince of Wales, he turned his face elsewhere, and having made his calculations, taught his pupil how to bend her beautiful, burning eyes on Carr.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ROBERT CARR.

ROBERT CARR was a Scottish lad of handsome person, for whom James had conceived a sudden and ridiculous whim.

The King, who could not live without having some youth about him whom he could pat and pinch, tickle and slobber, had cast his eyes in turn on Herbert and Hay, young fellows with flowing beards, pink cheeks, and empty skulls, who rarely troubled their brains with anything worse than a masque and a saraband. He kept his darling for a time, and then dethroned him for some newer and fairer face; but the darling of a day was seldom so unlucky as not to retire ennobled and enriched. Hume, Herbert, Hay, were all created Earls.

The Countess of Suffolk, knowing that the King was blind to the beauty of women, laid

herself out to supply him with removes of handsome boys. She spent her days in seeking for arch eyes, pink flesh, and graceful forms; and when she had found her Ganymede of an hour, she curled his locks and sweetened his breath to the royal taste. She taught these youths to leave politics alone; and to devote their talents to the service of beauty, as imaginary Knights of the Fortunate Isles, and to fight for such golden truths as—

Beauty supplies the world with valour;
None but lovers can be happy;
No fair lady ever yet was false.

Carr was the youngest of these curled and silken favourites. A page of Hume, he had spent some months in Paris, where he learned to dress and dance, to ride and run the ring. Coming to court he put on his best attire, and walked into the Tilt-yard, when the King was present, in a scarlet frock, a foam of lace, and an embroidered shirt. Contriving to be knocked over in the game, he caught the King's eye by his fall; and when James was told that the pretty boy was one of Hume's old pages, he carried him up into his room, put him into bed, and nursed him with his own hands, until the strength of a

roe returned to his feet and the bloom of an apple to his cheek. Thus began his fortunes. In a few months the King dubbed him Sir Robert, paid his debts, put jewels in his ears, swore him of the bed-chamber, and promised him the Lady Ann Clifford for a wife.

Left to his own devices, Carr would have risen like Herbert and Hay, to set like Montgomery and Carlisle. A coronet, a rich wife, a house in town, a chase in the country, would have quenched his appetite for favour; but by the side of Carr stood a young man, poor as himself in purse, but richer in the gifts of wit, of policy, and of speech. This youth was Thomas Overbury, a member of the House of Commons, a Puritan in morals and in thought, if not in opinion, a poet, a prose writer, a politician of consummate power. These lads had come to court in company. Something in Carr had taken the fancy of his more intellectual mate; who, measuring James from head to heel, had seen his way to making use of Carr in his attempt to rise. Swearing a league of friendship, the two young men had come to Whitehall with an understanding that, in seeking a fortune which they were to share and share alike, Carr was to find beauty of person, while Overbury was to find

strength of brain. They meant to make a figure in the world.

In their first five years at court they rose very high; for Carr, who was to enjoy the pleasures, while Overbury was to exercise the powers, of the high station they might win, was lifted from the position of a private page to the state of an adviser, and the rank of a viscount. Overbury, careless of show, was satisfied with being dubbed a knight, and consulted in every affair of State. A man of subtle and commanding genius; equal to many kinds of work; with powers of mind which made him easy master of every craft, Overbury had raised Carr to the height on which he stood; but neither King nor Court as yet knew the strength of Overbury and the emptiness of Carr. While the new Viscount reigned at Court, Overbury was the actual minister of the Crown. 'There was a time,' said Bacon on the trial, 'when Overbury knew more of the secrets of State than the whole council.' What Bacon said afterwards other people knew at the time. In the City taverns, it was a pasquil that Carr ruled the King, and that Overbury ruled Carr.

To the outside world, the rise of this favourite

was that of a shooting star. Who could tell where his flight would stop? He was now Viscount Rochester; he had the promise of an earldom; nay, a Marquisate of Orkney was likely to be his next birth-day gift. In those years we had neither duke nor marquis in the country, and a Marquis of Orkney would be the highest person in James's court. There were hints of the King adopting him as a son. Here, then, was no passing favourite such as the world had seen in Herbert and Hay. These men were liked; but Rochester was all in all. After the death of Cecil, who had kept him in his fitting place as a gentleman of the bed-chamber, Carr seemed to be the only man of whose presence and advice the King was never tired. Acting on Overbury's lessons, and speaking the words set down for him, the raw Scottish lad achieved a certain popularity, not only in the closet but in the street. He had the name of a stanch Protestant, and the reputation of an enemy of Spain. If his life was not lovely, he was not more lax in morals than many who had less than half his tempters to resist. No man's name, no woman's fame, had yet been smirched by Carr. If men could say that his rise had been swift, his accumulation of riches sudden,

they could add, with truth, that he had shown many of the virtues as well as some of the vices of a royal favourite. Even in temper, gracious in bearing, bountiful in disposition, he had gained admirers, even where he had not secured friends. A man of Overbury's gifts could not have worked with a fool. To the poets Carr was uniformly kind; both Jonson and Donne have written in his praise. Even Bacon, though he owed him nothing, was not unwilling to grace him with a masque. For the rest, his power to go wrong was checked by a feeble will.

For two or three years, this favourite had been watched and thwarted by Northampton, Knollys, and Suffolk, who saw that he was not as they were; though they crossed him less for his own sake than for that of Overbury, whose principles and talents they equally feared and shunned. On Cecil's death, a scramble had taken place at court, not only for the White Staff, but for the important post of Secretary of State. The place of Secretary, though of lesser dignity than that of Treasurer, was of more importance, since the holder of it was in daily intercourse with the King; and a man of active genius would be sure to make it the centre of every movement

in the realm. The inner circle of the Council was now composed of three great peers, allied in blood and marriage; Northampton, his nephew Suffolk, and that nephew's son-in-law, Knollys; and these great peers, in seeking to gain these offices for their party, had the advantage of voting with a single voice. Northampton spoke, and the younger men obeyed. When they had got the staff put into commission, as the only thing that could then be done, they fought for the minor and nearer post of Secretary. Winwood, Wotton, Bacon, Lake, were mentioned, as men who could serve their country; but the King, though he did not like to say so in the outset, was resolved to have no other Secretary than Carr.

Now Carr in the King's closet, writing letters on public business, was, as Northampton felt, but another form of having Overbury for a master. Carr was Overbury's voice; and Overbury was an enemy of Spain. If Overbury were to shape the policy of James, Northampton and Suffolk would hardly be worth their salt.

Lady Suffolk had already tried her arts on Carr; but Overbury, whose morals were austere, though he hungered after power even more than his ally after flattery and female smiles, repelled

her. Overbury had a difficult game to play; for Carr, though popular at court, was far from popular in the town. The qualities which took the King—his dainty face, his splendid garb, and his Lowland Scotch—provoked the people into scorn. The London crowd could not endure a Scot. Poor in purse, and quick in speech, his bold eye, his ready hand, his saucy tongue, disgusted men who either would not, or could not, see his nobler side. To them, his courage was the merit of a mastiff, his abstinence the virtue of a fox, his loyalty the cringing of a slave. Even his religious ardour pained them, as a passion in excess; and no reproach appeared to them severe enough for the roaring, rieving callant, who aped the fashion of a court in the midst of filth and rags. Now Carr, though handsome, civil, and well dressed, was still a Scot; and Northampton made the King believe, that to give him Cecil's post in the closet would provoke a rising in the streets.

Unable to have his way, the King declared that in the future he would act as Secretary of State himself.

Northampton was not deceived by James's move. He saw that Carr was rising in the world;

and hungering after posts which none but Carr could give him, he was base enough, not only to dream of gaining him over to their party through his lovely niece, but shameless enough to teach that girl how to lay her beauty in his path.

The young lady did not need much training to go wrong. She knew the way too well. Only too early in her life she had found a priestess of indulgence in Ann Turner, the famous White Witch. Ann, who had been a lovely girl, was still a winsome woman; white, graceful, slender, looking like a lady of birth, a little faded from her prime. Even when she stood, years later, at the bar of justice, the poets could only sing—

> The roses on her lovely cheeks were dead.

Now, this White Witch professed, among other arts, to understand how to preserve youth, to kindle love, and to chill desire. In the task which Northampton set her, Lady Essex had need of all her charms. From Ann Turner, the fair Countess got one philtre to chill the man she called her husband, another to warm the man she wished to call her lover. When these philtres failed to work her ends, at least on Essex, who truly loved his wife, Ann took her noble pupil to a great

magician living in a lonely house in Lambeth fields. This sorcerer was Simon Forman, a fellow known to be driving a brisk and profitable trade in potions, horoscopes, and charms. Forman had more to do with great ladies than Mayerne himself; and, as he impudently set down in his diaries, he took his payment from these dupes in various ways. This knave supplied the young Countess of Essex with enchanted papers, a few wax puppets, a scarf full of white crosses, and a piece of human skin. Later on, he adopted her as his 'daughter' in the black art, permitting her to call him 'father,' and giving her a scroll on which he had noted for her use a list of the principal imps in hell.

Lady Essex had scant need for magic. Carr was only too soon in love with her bright eyes, and asking no aid from Forman's scrolls and fiends. Northampton played Old Pandarus to this guilty pair, just as he had done when Cecil was the Troilus, Lady Suffolk the Cressida of his play. He put the young wife in the young favourite's way, and even lent them his house to meet in. Often beneath the roof, sometimes in the sight of that old man, they kissed and swore to each other to be true.

Suffolk, younger and less base than his uncle, forced his daughter to live in her husband's house. Essex, though grieving to see that his wife's heart was gone from him, never dreamt that her honour was also gone; and kind in temper as he was princely in gifts, he set himself to win once more the love which for the moment he saw that he had lost. She pouted, raved, and mocked him; hoping he would flash into anger and turn her out of doors. Her husband bore with these humours, thinking they were but the ways of young married girls. His wife was dark to him as night. Nor could two such natures as his and hers come nearer than they stood. He, pious and severe, rode to sermon; she, profligate and superstitious, went to mass. He loved the country, while she adored the town. Masques, balls, processions, priests, dress, sports and triumphs, all the things to which her heart lay open, he would have shunned for himself and for the woman whom he loved. Early hours, long rides through the summer woods, attention to the poor and sick, the duties of a country household, all that round of love and usefulness which Essex craved as the purest work that he could find on earth, his Countess flung at his feet in anger and contempt.

Ann Turner's service to her mistress did not end in the magician's study. She hired a house for her in the medical quarter of St. Paul's, near Amen Corner, in which she might meet her lover, unseen by watchful critics of the court. Carr was young and she was fair. No devil on Forman's list found more delight in doing wrong than Lady Essex. Yet, in the midst of all her profligacy, she was careful to make her game. Lord Rochester being the most powerful man at Whitehall, she made up her mind to share his power; not for a season only, but for life.

The obstacles in her path were vast. She had a husband to get rid of; Rochester, a friend to put away; and with these two men she was only too well aware that she would have to conduct a duel to the death.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE POWDER POISONING.

Essex, a man of high rank, was proud of his name, and quick to avenge affronts. How could she get rid of such a man? She thought of poison; she thought of steel; she thought of Holy Church. A divorce would be the best of all; but how could a divorce be got? The only plea to be set up in such a case as hers—that of nullity from the first—was one which no man likes to admit and few women like to urge.

Listening, now to Northampton, now to Ann Turner, she conceived a triple scheme for getting rid of the husband whose name she bore. She egged on her brother Henry to send him a challenge; she paid the Lambeth wizard to waste his strength by magic; she gave a diamond ring, with the promise of a thousand pounds, to Mary Wood, a Norfolk hag, renowned for ridding ladies of their inconvenient lords, for a philtre war-

ranted to kill in three days. But all these efforts failed her. The King forbade the duel; the wizard's dolls and scarfs were powerless; and the Norfolk hag deceived her with a philtre which would not kill. When magic, steel, and poison failed her, she fell back on her idea of divorce.

While the Countess was poring through the ways and means for getting a divorce from Essex, the White Witch and some lesser agents of evil were employed in removing Overbury from her path. In spite of his high talents, Overbury lay open to such arts as Northampton's corrupt nature and Italian education had taught him to abuse. Pride of genius led him into unwise scorn of men who had been schooled to rise by paths more devious than his own. The very frankness of his opposition to Spain armed Northampton against him, while his nobleness of soul prevented him from seeing to what desperate shifts a man of such high rank could stoop. He overrated Carr; not his power of resisting money and favour; for there his friend was strong; but his power of resisting the more perilous trial of liquid eyes and a wanton tongue. A sense of original force, which, often as it was tried, had never yet failed him, gave to Overbury's native

haughtiness an austerity and emphasis very hard to bear. The Queen complained of him; the King resented his scornful tone; and citizens wagered their golden angels as to which was the proudest, Raleigh, Overbury, or Lucifer. The prize was given to Overbury. None of the courtiers loved him, for he took no pains to please them. Weak on every side, except that of his intellect, he invited and defied Northampton's arts.

So long as Overbury thought his friend's intrigue with Lady Essex was the fancy of a day, he let it pass in silence; smiling grimly at the old man's baseness, in selling the honour of his house for a mess of pottage; but he felt that it would never do for him to let this fancy of a moment sink into a permanent madness of the heart; and when he saw that Carr was running after the siren day and night, he warned him gravely against her vicious wiles. He spoke too late. Calypso had sung her slave to sleep. A fact came out by accident to have startled him from his dream of enduring happiness with such a woman. Mary Wood, the Norfolk hag, was arrested for petty theft, and, in her rage at being abandoned by her noble patrons, confessed her

name, her trade, and her employers. The story of the poisonous drug and the diamond ring was told; and the truth of her tale was confirmed by Richard Grimston, the poursuivant, on a very important point. This story was referred to the Council, in which her kinsmen sat; but the secret inquiry came to Overbury's ears, and roused him to take a decided course. With consummate art, for Carr was proud and hasty, not to be schooled too openly, he warned him against her alluring smiles; now tickling him with easy banter, now stinging him with grave advice. To show what sort of woman a man should seek in wedlock, he wrote his poem called The Wife; that gracious picture of holy love in contrast with unholy lust. A wise man, said the poet, first seeks in a wife—not beauty, rank, and wealth; fools seek for such things first; but the higher virtues of the soul. First, he hopes to find her good—then wise—then fit—and last of all comely. All that Lady Essex was, he urged his friend to shun. But Carr slept soundly in Calypso's lap, as deaf to the poet's verse as he had been to the Witch's charge.

Lady Essex and her Nestor now resolved that he must die. Their plans required his death. That he could stop their suit for a divorce, they

knew; that he would use his power, they also knew. Less than his blood would neither serve their ambition nor appease their wrath. At first they thought of hiring an assassin. Unlike Essex, the poet was not a master of his sword; and Lady Essex sent to Greenwich for Sir David Wood, a soldier of fortune, who had been crossed by Overbury in a job. 'I am told you have grievous wrongs against Sir Thomas Overbury,' she began at once: 'I am also told you are a brave gentleman. He who has wronged you, has wronged me. I should be glad to hear he is no more.' Wood hung fire. They were alone in her chamber, and she quickly explained her hints. She told him that she wished him to kill Sir Thomas; she promised him a thousand pounds, and offered him the friendship of Carr and the protection of all her kin. Wood was willing, but only on conditions that Carr should come forward in person, and assure him before a witness of his safety when the deed was done. She promised that Carr should give that pledge. But she dared not ask her lover for such a promise; and sending for Wood once more, she told him she would pledge her own life for his safety, come what might. Wood answered bluntly, that he was not such a fool as go to Tyburn

on a lady's word. 'Why,' urged the Countess, 'the thing is easily done; he sups every night at Sir Charles Wilmot's house; stop his coach; drag him out, and run him through.' The bravo shook his head and left her in despair.

Northampton hit upon a safer plan.

The King was not fond of Overbury; and the pages who were near him, taking Northampton's cue, began to fret his ear by telling him that the people who met in fairs and taverns made jests against him, saying that he could not rule his realm without Overbury, since Overbury found all the wit for Carr, and Carr found all the wit for him. James swore a big oath that Overbury should be sent abroad—as far as Moscow—if only to let folk see whether the King could not rule without his aid. Overbury declined to go. They had taken care beforehand that he should decline, and so offend the King; but he had only refused the task on Rochester begging him not to go, since the proposal was a trick of their enemies to put the seas between them. Thus, he declined; when James, incensed at his refusal of so high a trust, gave orders for his instant arrest.

Overbury was lodged in the Bloody tower.

Out of sight, the poet soon fell out of Carr's

remembrance. How far Rochester consented to his murder is uncertain; though it is clear that many of the steps which led to it were taken by him in person. Lady Essex and the White Witch had resolved to poison Overbury long before he was committed to the Tower. When they had locked him fast, they fell to work, like artists knowing what they meant to do.

The first step was to change the Lieutenant; for Waad, though insolent and slavish, was not the man to put his neck into a coil of rope, by murdering one of his prisoners in open day. Who could assure him that his deed would never come to light? Murder will out; and when murder comes out, it is hard for any man to cheat the gallows of its due. Northampton had his agent ready; and when he sent for Waad to his mansion at Charing Cross, that agent was waiting in a room below. The Earl accused Waad of being too lenient with his new prisoner, and told him bluntly that he should not go back to his post. Waad was surprised; but on Northampton hinting that much of Lady Arabella's plate was missing, and that the Lieutenant was supposed to know what had become of it, he was so much frightened that he gave up his commission on the

spot. He left Northampton House with fourteen hundred pounds in his pocket, and a promise of six hundred pounds more, if he would only hold his tongue. A ruined gambler, one Sir Gervase Helwyss, was then brought in. What passed between the proud peer and the obscure knight we shall never learn; but that very night, without a warrant, without an oath, this ruffian was installed as Lieutenant of the Tower. The note of his appointment was scrawled at Northampton house, and the record of it afterwards inserted in a blank corner of the Council book. All his instructions, as to the treatment of his prisoner, Helwyss received directly from the Lord Privy Seal.

The second step was to change the keeper; for in such a business they could not trust an ordinary fellow to do their will. In Ann Turner's house there lived a servant worthy of such a mistress; one Richard Weston, a tailor, with a soul too big for a yard and goose. Having tried his skill in sorcery and coining, he had run through a round of jails before adopting the more profitable trade of pimp. As Mrs. Turner's man he had been employed to carry notes from the Countess to Carr, to arrange their guilty pleasures in Paternoster Row, to

watch over their secret meetings at the Brentford farm. He knew his masters, and they knew their tool. A bag of gold would buy him, body and soul; and the Countess never paused to count the cost of what she had a mind to buy. She asked Sir Thomas Monson to get this fellow appointed keeper in the Bloody tower; but Monson, though eager to oblige so great a lady, thought it well to consult the Privy Seal—an act of prudence to which he afterwards owed his life. Northampton told him not only that Weston's appointment to wait on Overbury would be right, but that the King himself wished Weston to be placed in charge. Monson took him to the Tower and put him in the poet's room.

From that night Overbury's strength began to fail. Though his offence was only a contempt, he was confined more strictly than men who had been condemned to die. A secret order from Northampton closed up every avenue to the Bloody tower. Sir Nicholas, his father, and Lady Lydcot, his sister, were turned away from his door. Lydcot moved the court for leave to visit him, but he was only allowed to see him at his grated window. Davis, one of his men, proposed to be locked up with his master, day and night, and

he was kicked away from the Tower. Sir Robert Killigrew, the physician, was clapped in the Fleet for trying to speak with him. Even Rochester's messages were stopped. Northampton was resolved that he should die, and he took pains that none save creatures of his own should enter into Overbury's cell. Yet the poet's strong stomach caused much delay; and letters got in and out, in spite of the Lieutenant's care. Monson told the Lieutenant that notes might pass under his eye in tarts and jellies, if he were not sharp; and when Simon Marson, the King's musician, brought to the Tower a present of jellies, which Lady Essex wished to be given to Overbury in the name of Carr, the Lieutenant, poking into them for correspondence, found that they were poisoned, and refused to let them pass. Weston sneered at such scruples; but Helwyss could not tell how far his employers wished him to go, and he had a strong desire to escape a murderer's doom.

On Tower Hill, in a small shop, lived one James Franklin, an apothecary, less honest in his trade than he who put poison into Romeo's hands. Like all the agents employed by Lady Essex, Franklin was a Papist; and this fellow, though he professed to keep a devil, and was said to have

poisoned his wife, was brought to assist in committing murder, not only by the payment of a hundred and twenty pounds in gold, but by the hope of doing good service to his Church. From Franklin, Weston received a phial of stuff like water, which Mrs. Turner instructed him how to mix with his prisoner's drink. But Helwyss, still in doubt, detained the phial, and poured the drug upon the ground; even while he was suffering Weston to lay the tarts and jellies from Lady Essex on the prisoner's dish.

These poisons crept into the poet's veins. His cheek began to pale, and his voice to drop. On Overbury begging in his misery that a friend and a physician might come to see him, Rochester appeared in person before the Council, and procured a warrant for Lydcot and Killigrew to enter his cell; but when the favourite was gone away from the Council board, Northampton and Suffolk revoked their pass. The prisoner, they wrote to Helwyss, must be closely kept; and if he needed a physician, *they* would send one to him.

To draw his mind from thoughts of their foul play, Suffolk caused Overbury to be told that Rochester and he were on bad terms; and on Northampton's hints, he even went so far in this

deceit as to ask for Overbury's good offices with Rochester, in return for his own in Overbury's favour with the King. Northampton took these messages to the Tower; and when the poet was thought to be off his guard, the French adventurer, Mayerne, rode down to the Bloody tower, and marked his prisoner with a poisoner's eye. Lobel, a French apothecary, and Reeve, his English boy, were appointed to do the deed.

The poet knew that he was being poisoned. Helwyss told him that Lord Rochester had sent him an emetic, as his lordship wished him to look sick, in order that the King's compassionate feelings might be touched. The poet was annoyed at such feeble tricks; and Northampton schooled his Lieutenant into exciting Overbury to use the language of reproach towards Rochester, while he himself pressed on the work of drugging him to death. When all was ready, Lobel made the glister, which his apprentice Reeve applied.

The poet was no more.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE END.

Carr heard of the poet's death without a sigh. The courtiers who watched him closely saw, or afterwards thought they saw, a gleam of unusual brightness pass across his face when he heard the news. He flew to his enchantress, told her the story of his death, and sealed her rapture with a lover's kiss.

Northampton, fearing that men's tongues would wag against him in the city, requested Helwyss to send for Lydcot to the Tower, but to take care that the corpse should be buried before he came. The poet was put under ground before his flesh was cold.

The wedding-day was fixed, the feast of St. Stephen, 1613. Rochester was made an earl, so that Lady Essex would not have to descend from her former rank by marrying him. Sherborne Castle was torn from Raleigh to provide

them with a country seat. Lady Raleigh put up her hands to heaven; and then the splendid nuptials of the Earl and Countess of Somerset were celebrated in the royal chapel at Whitehall, with a splendid ceremony, a round of dances, and a gorgeous masque.

Just eight years earlier, on the same day, in the same chapel, before the same king and queen, in presence of nearly all the same lords and ladies, with the same officiating bishop, the young lady, then a fair and innocent child, had been married to the young and handsome Earl of Essex. Two years later, that brilliant throng was scattered to the winds. The hero and heroine of that day, now man and wife, with their passions chilled, their spirits broken, their lives forfeited, were lying in the Tower; a bickering and unhappy pair; conscious of their fall; and eager to impute their ruin to each other's crimes. Lady Somerset now contemned her low-born husband; Lord Somerset now abhorred his wicked wife.

Northampton never got the White Staff for which he had done so much, for nature could not wait, and when the surgeons who were called to Northampton House had cut the putrid sore in his side, he fell at once. A priest, who waited in

his chamber, gave him the host, laid pall and cross on his bed, and set tapers burning for him night and day. He died with yells of accusation ringing in his ears, which all his power as a Privy Councillor could not silence. Peers, burgesses, and citizens accused him of being not only a Papist and a pensioner of Spain, but the secret soul of all the Catholic plots. In vain he raved and stormed; in vain he threw himself at the favourite's feet; in vain he pointed out what he had done against Fawkes and Garnet. The mask was falling from his face, and men began to see him for what he was. He died in a gorgeous chamber of Northampton House (June 1614)—in time, but only just in time, to save himself from a cell in the Bloody tower.

For the poet in his grave had begun to make war on the peer in his palace. Friends of Overbury, who were also friends of virtue, had printed his poem The Wife, and the public snapt up five editions of that noble satire in as many months. The reader of the poem talked of the poet, and then old tales were told once more about the manner of his death. An accident gave to these rumours a sudden, ominous shape; for Reeve, the French apothecary's lad, fell sick in Flanders, and

in his agony of conscience spread the news of what his master had been hired to do. Trumball, the English Resident in Flanders, hastened home with this report, not daring to write such words as Reeve had spoken in his fear and pain. Winwood, the new Secretary of State, a Puritan, who hated the Howards with a good deal of secret energy, received Trumball's news with a grim delight, and sent him back to Flanders, with orders to keep an eye upon the lad.

Winwood moved with a wary step, for the boy's confession touched the fame of some of the highest persons in the realm. He dropt some hints that Helwyss was unfit for such a post as Lieutenant of the Tower, and when that officer, in trying to excuse himself, had half confessed his guilt, the Secretary of State rode down to Royston and laid his proofs before the King.

James read the confessions, and sent them on to Coke, by whom a swift and secret search was made for further facts. The injured Waad came forward; and his evidence touched, not only the more active agents in the crime, but Monson, Northampton, Lady Somerset and Carr. After he had arrested Mrs. Turner, her man Weston, and the apothecary Franklin, Coke applied for powers to examine

Helwyss, Mayerne, and Sir Thomas Monson. The facts which came to light suggested that the murder of Overbury, daring and open as it was, had been no more than a single act in a great drama of public crime. Ann Turner spoke of Prince Henry as having been poisoned with a bunch of grapes; and Weston talked of wizards and druggists going over to Heidelberg, with orders to cut off Frederick and Elizabeth. Carr began to tremble; and thinking it might be well to cover his past life by a general pardon, he sent for Sir Robert Cotton to his room, and begged that antiquary to seek among his papers for the largest pardon ever granted by a sovereign prince. Cotton found a pardon issued by a Pope for the crimes of treason, murder, felony, and rape, and on the model of this grant the Earl of Somerset drew a pardon for himself, and got the document signed by James. But Ellesmere refused to pass it; saying, that to put the Great Seal of England to such a paper would subject the Lord Chancellor to a premunire.

Coke was so far ready with his proofs, that the King was forced to appoint a commission of inquiry into the poet's death; Ellesmere, Lennox, Zouch and Coke were the commissioners; and their meetings were held in the Lord Chancellor's

residence, York House, to which they summoned Helwyss and Monson, as well as Weston, Franklin, and Mrs. Turner. Weston told them the story of his crime, the love affairs of Lady Essex and Carr, the secret meetings in Paternoster Row and at the Brentford farm, the original prompting of Lady Essex to the murder, the promises given in her name by Mrs. Turner, the appointment made through Monson for him to wait in the Bloody tower, the failure of his philtres, the altercation with Helwyss, the receipt of the poisoned tarts and jellies, the impatience of Lady Essex to have the thing done, the visit of Mayerne, the employment of Lobel, and the glisters which caused the prisoner's death. Ere long, Mrs. Turner and Franklin confessed their guilt; the first giving up the implements of magic received by her from Forman,—the roll of devils, the scarf of white crosses, the bundle of waxen dolls, and the scrap of human skin; the second raving against his imp and his employer; one for not warning him in time, the other for bewitching him to his ruin, and then leaving him to perish.

The day of Lord and Lady Somerset was come. In raking up evidence against Mrs. Turner, the Commissioners found that on the day of her arrest Lady Somerset had not only sent her secret

messages to fear nothing, but had got her husband to sign a warrant for John Poulton, a poursuivant, to search the Beaver Hat, a house near Temple Bar, and to bring away all the papers which he found there in a certain trunk and bag. The Beaver Hat was kept by Weston's son, and Poulton was accompanied in his search by Lady Somerset's maid. The contents of these papers could be guessed, and when the Commissioners learned that Poulton had taken them to Somerset's house, they despatched their messenger with orders for the Earl to keep his lodging near the Cockpit, and for the Countess to remain either in her own house at Blackfriars, or with her elder sister, Lady Knollys, near the Tiltyard. Husband and wife were not to see each other. A messenger bore a letter to Royston, where the King was hunting, signed by Egerton, Lennox, Zouch, and Coke, urging that the proofs against Somerset were now so strong, that he ought to be stripped of the Seals and lodged for safety in the Tower.

James kissed his favourite and gave him up. The tools of Lady Somerset were quickly put away. Helwyss was hanged in chains, and the gibbet on which he swung was left to stand for a warning on Tower hill. Mrs. Turner was hung at

Tyburn, in her yellow bands and powdered hair, in the presence of a mighty crowd, many of whom wept for the beautiful though faded creature, who knew the secret ways to all female hearts. She stood on the gallows, raving at the world she was about to leave, and calling down fire from heaven to consume it in the midst of sin and shame. Franklin and Weston were strung up like dogs.

How was justice to deal with the greatest criminal of all? Could a lady of the race of Howard be hung for a private murder?

Somerset had burnt the papers seized by Poulton at the Beaver Hat, but the confessions wrung from Weston, Franklin, Helwyss, and Mrs. Turner, would have sufficed to hang the principals, had such been the King's desire. Taken from his lodgings near the Cockpit, Somerset was placed under charge of Sir Oliver St. John; and when the Privy Seal had been taken from him, he was carried with a single servant, to the Tower. As he passed from Water Lane through the dark archway, Raleigh was coming out. 'It is the case of Haman and Mordecai,' said the great captive, then going out into freedom. James was told of this speech. 'Raleigh,' he observed, 'may die in that

deceit.' The King was probably of Carr's opinion that the storm would soon whirl by.

Sir George More, the new Lieutenant, conducted the Earl and Countess of Somerset to the Bloody tower, and bade them enter. 'Put me not in there,' cried Lady Somerset, white with terror. She knew it was the room in which she had murdered her husband's friend. 'I shall never sleep again,' she shrieked; 'his ghost will haunt my bed; put me elsewhere!' Somerset went in; and the Lieutenant urged her to follow him. In fact, he had no other lodging ready for prisoners of such high rank. But she would not stir. 'Put me elsewhere! put me elsewhere!' she sobbed. Sir George had to carry her back to his own apartments, until Raleigh's house in the garden could be got ready for her use.

Somerset raged and pouted in his prison; bullying the new Lieutenant, Sir George More—sending for Lord Hay—demanding to see the King. When told that Sir George must write any message which he wished to be forwarded to James, he refused to send at all. When the Commissioners offered to hear him, he turned on his heel with a gesture of contempt.

At court the conflict of opposing forces raged

with fury, for the Howards and their kinsfolk were a party in the state, with nearly half the public offices in their hands. Suffolk had got the Staff for which his uncle pined. Among them the Howards had the Mint, the Treasury, the Admiralty, the Army, the Household, the Cinque Ports, and the Channel Fleet; and as Lord Lieutenants they commanded the nine counties of Berks, Oxon, Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Surrey, Dorset, Herts, and Kent. Opposed to this great family were the Puritans and patriots of every shade; men so various in opinion and accomplishment as Pembroke and Bacon, Winwood and Raleigh, Villiers and Southampton. Clever as the courtiers were in guessing, they could not say which side would prove the stronger. Writing his Golden Age for a Christmas masque, Ben Jonson trimmed his verse to the uncertain winds; but nobler poets than Jonson spoke the indignant passions of the time. Ford, with fearless chivalry, composed a history of Overbury's Life and Death. He also wrote some verses on The Wife: as did a stronger and wiser pen than that of Ford. In the massive measure and volcanic heat of the lines by W. S. (prefixed to the seventh edition, and published in the exciting days between the arrest and trial), some critics see

the last public service done by Shakspeare. It is certain that his patrons, Pembroke and Southampton, took a leading part in bringing the poet's murderers to account.

The King's heart melted towards his minion, but he dared not free him from the Tower until his innocence had been proved in an open court. The town was full of Overbury, and books of which he was the hero were on every stall in Cheape and Fleet Street. A ninth edition of The Wife appeared, and a companion poem called The Husband was brought out. Overbury was known to have been a Protestant, an enemy of Spain; so that patriotic passion entered deeply into the cry for justice on his murderers, and the King was borne upon a stream which he could neither stem nor turn.

When the Commissioners closed their labours, and fixed the day of Lady Somerset's trial (May 24, 1616), the arraignment was considered by the country as a national solemnity. All private business was suspended for a time. The shops were closed, the parks deserted. Every one who could afford to spend five double angels bought a seat in Westminster Hall; and the thousands who could not press inside the Hall choked up the avenues of

Palace Yard, in order to catch the first news that the weak Earl and his bad Countess had been convicted of murder and condemned to die.

The Countess held up her hand, in answer to her name. A warder stood beside her with the axe. Attired in a gown of black tammel, a cypress chaperon, and a large lawn ruff, looking as penitent as she was beautiful, she bent her pale face to her judges, pleading guilty to her crime. Bacon, as the Attorney-general, spoke without harshness to the fallen Countess; Ellesmere, as Lord Chancellor, pronounced her sentence; and the warder, as executioner of the court, turned towards her the gleaming steel. She shed abundant tears, and begged the Lords to intercede for mercy with the King.

That night, Sir George More was alone with Somerset in his room. The prisoner was morose and threatening, though he knew that his wife had pleaded guilty and been condemned to die. He defied the judges and the peers. He said he would not answer to his name. More hinted that the King was anxious that he should confess his crime, accept a verdict, and trust his bounty for the rest. But Somerset would not yield. For six or seven days there had been

much negotiation between the crown and the prisoner. Lord Hay had been chosen on the part of James. Sir George had been authorised to make Carr a specific promise, that on pleading guilty and evading proof, the life of Lady Somerset should be spared and his own honour as a peer should be saved. He rejected every offer. He said he would not plead. In look and tone, if not in words, he dared the court to bring him before his peers.

Late in the evening, More took horse for Greenwich, and after a midnight interview with the King rode back to the Tower.

Early in the May morning, More was at the door of Somerset's room. The Earl was already dressed in black, as if in mourning for his wife. He wore a plain black satin suit, laid with two satin laces in a seam; a gown of velvet, lined with unshorn; the sleeves trimmed with lace, and the gloves adorned with satin tops. He had the George about his neck. His hair was neatly curled, and his beard fell richly on his chest. More noticed that his eyes were sunk in his head, and that his face was very pale.

A moment before he stood up in court, the Lieutenant whispered in his ear that if he said

one word against the King he should be dragged down, sentenced in his absence, and immediately put to death. To show his prisoner that he meant what he was saying, he placed two strong fellows close to him, each with a cloak on his arm, with orders to watch his lips, and on a word being dropped about the King, to throw their cloaks over his face, pull him down, and hurry him away on the ground that he was mad.

Somerset denied the charge, and put his accusers to the proof. That part of the evidence which concerned Mayerne, Lobel, and his boy Reeve, had been suppressed; and the court could not prove his guilt unless that evidence were produced. Bacon was very skilful; but his proofs were vague and incomplete. The long May day wore out in speeches which divided and perplexed the public; and when the torchmen entered with their lights, the darkness in the street was not more evident than the darkness in the hall of justice. Ellesmere asked for a verdict, and broke his staff; but when Somerset went back to the Tower that night, no one could say that he was guilty of the murder, though every one knew that he had been condemned to die.

The Earl and Countess of Somerset came near together once again, but not as man and wife who love and trust each other. The doors of the Bloody tower and of the Garden house were left ajar, and they were sometimes overheard in angry talk. If Overbury's ghost could have visited them, either by day or night, the murdered man might have felt avenged by a misery so complete.

Their dream of state was gone; their hope of rest not come. The last years of their lives were to be spent in poverty, in loneliness, in mutual scorn. In time, on a pardon being vouchsafed them by the king, they left the Bloody tower and Garden house together; going away, men said, to live in some country place, in a small house which had been left to them. There they dwelt under a common roof for a good many years to come; living apart; nursing a blue-eyed girl, who had been born to them whilst they lay under the charge of murder; but otherwise groaning in a state of misery which was not untruly described as hell upon earth.

But out of evil comes, not seldom, by a higher law than men can fashion, a form of goodness to redeem it. Even as a lily feeds and grows out of dust and ashes, that blue-eyed girl, the

child of so much sin, was to grow up in that secluded house, ignorant of her mother's shame, into one of the purest and proudest mothers in a land illustrious for her noble women. Lady Ann Carr was the only child of the guilty pair; and this daughter of a murderess lived to become the mother of that Lord William Russell, who was to lay his head upon the block in the very same cause for which Raleigh died.

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